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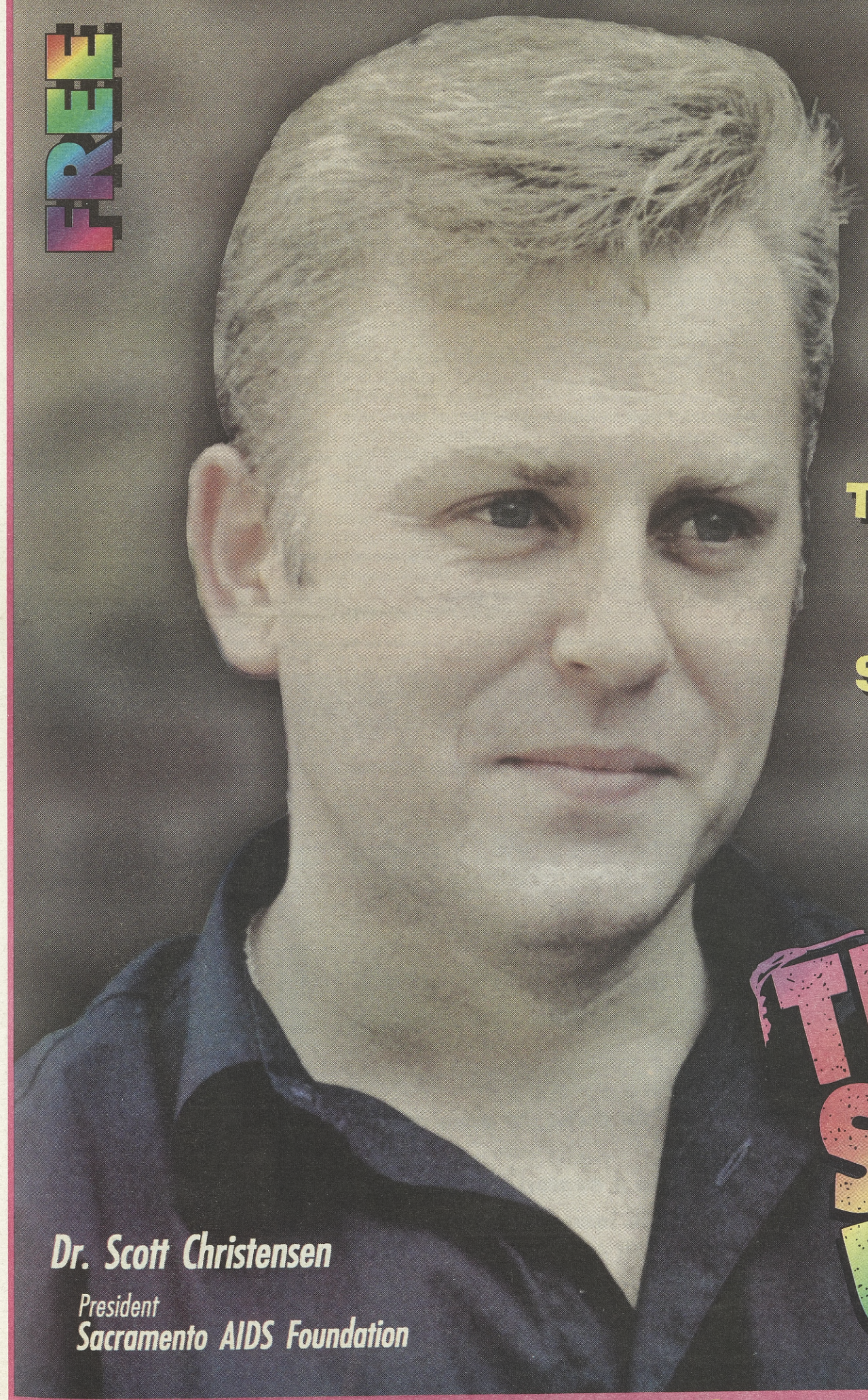

Also Inside:

Townhall Meeting

Just As I Am

Sac Valley Bears

Sex on T.V.

Dr. Scott Christensen

President
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THIS SIDE UP

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VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 APRIL 1998

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Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

By Scott Christensen, M.D.
TSU Writer/Columnist

In 1987, the HIV pandemic was firmly established, but I, as a young physician, was not. AIDS was a new and incredibly challenging arena for me, full of promise yet to come. I was just beginning to take my first steps on what has become one of the defining journeys of my life. Now, in 1998, having experienced much more than I would have desired, I find myself in some ways no closer to Oz than when I took my first steps.

HIV used to be a relatively simple disease, from a physician's perspective. Oh, of course there was the "excitement" of rare diseases, the "allure" of complicated treatments. Yet, in the midst of all this cerebral stimulation remained the simple fact that truly effective therapies were nonexistent. AZT, the first great hope, was promoted as the "cure," at least initially. One can't be blamed for some hyperbole when finally *something* seems to work.

The year was 1988. People were beginning to live longer, albeit at considerable cost, both physically and economically. Side-effects were substantial, and for many, quality of life actually worsened instead of improved. Still, this progress was considered a triumph in the war against HIV in which we had won relatively few battles.

But people were still dying, and truthfully, still are.

We now have thirteen years of progress in both our understanding and treatment of HIV. There are more options, more complications, and even some new problems. Our methods of detection and staging disease have become more sophisticated. People are indeed living longer and in many cases living better. Yet, it strikes me, as a care-giver, as particularly ironic that the questions I first asked so long ago are still pertinent today.

Why is this happening?

What can I do to make it better?

Does all of this "stuff" make any difference?

To paraphrase a famous (or infamous) quote, "are we really better off?" If this existential musing sounds strange to you, then I believe you're in good company. In 1998, HIV treatment has perhaps, finally, begun to pay attention to some of the more subtle, and more mettlesome, aspects of this disease. We now have the luxury of choice and option, but also the added burden of uncertainty. We still have no cure.

It's perhaps best now to mention that most of my training as a physician lies in the field of Oncology, which is the study and treatment of cancer. I'm somewhat unusual for an HIV care-giver, most of whom are trained in infectious diseases. One of the benefits of this background, at least to me, is the constant exposure to situations in which there are no cures, no easy answers. Despite major advances, cancer remains in most ways as difficult a challenge as HIV. Treatments are expensive, complicated, and extremely impactful on one's quality of life. The parallels between the two are in fact numerous.

Which, of course, in a roundabout way, brings me to the point. I have come to the growing realization that in HIV treatment, there really are very few bad decisions. Lest I be accused of nihilism, let me stress that in incurable diseases, *individual* concerns seem to outweigh medically rational "dogma." As I often tell my patients, "you can't make a bad decision, you can only make the one that's best for you."

Unfortunately, with choice comes consequence and responsibility. We need to begin to re-examine our assumptions, as treatment is no longer a simple, generic, one drug answer. Dualistic thought processes need to be discarded.

My foremost goals as a physician are to cure when possible, but to always ease pain and suffering. If I'm not doing these, then perhaps I need to re-examine my goals. After all, who is *really* the patient? It's past time to recognize that within reasonable parameters, HIV treatment is an individual *process* to which we as caregivers need to devote more attention. Sociology and psychology need as much care and nurturing as biology. In the coming issues, I hope to explore these themes more completely, with the aid and advice of my most important advisers-my patients.

In 1998, my understanding of HIV disease is certainly more complete than it was in 1987. I've made discoveries, some mistakes, and even lost some friends. Sounds pretty normal, part of the natural rhythm of life.

I'm still off searching for the Emerald City, and I'm looking forward to the journey ahead. Perhaps, like that young woman from Kansas, I'll better appreciate the here and now, and cherish the adventures as close as my own back yard.

If my experiences with HIV have given me any gifts, this is surely one of the most precious.

TSU...

Dr. Scott Christensen is a Hematologist/Oncologist at U.C. Davis Cancer Center and serves as President of the Sacramento AIDS Foundation. Dr. Christensen may be reached care of This Side UP Newspaper at 920A 20th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Thanks to Weatherstone Coffee & Trading Co. for letting us shoot our cover photo on their patio!

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Letters to This Side Up...

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Dear *TSU*,

After reading my interview with Matthew Burlingame (Vol. 1, Issue 1), I realized something I think should be made known. Many people regard me as the "Founder" of Breaking Barriers, but I was not. Breaking Barriers is the fruit of the River City MCC and was brought into being by two dedicated members of the congregation: Rebecca and Diane Feagins. The fact that Breaking Barriers received its initial funding was a result of the hard work of these two women and several other members of the congregation. I would like to recognize the contribution of all those involved in the program's inception; and to publicly thank the River City MCC, its Board of Directors and members for their ongoing support.

River City MCC is the fiscal agent for our programs. It is with the church's nonprofit status, and because of it's financial stability, that we receive funding from such sources as the Ryan Whitecare Program. I'd also like to make it known that the church receives no percentage of these funds for its own administration costs.

Thank you and...Congratulations on a fabulous first issue!

John Rambo
Breaking Barriers

Dear Jim, Matthew, Anny and Tom,

Thanks for covering the *Community* Town Hall meeting Saturday, March 28th. Your collective and individual comments were greatly appreciated.

Donna Matthews
Kimberly Weer

Dear *TSU*,

Congratulations on the introduction of your new publication to the local scene. *TSU* is a welcome edition to what has been available to *Our Community* for some time now. The areas you intend to focus on have hardly been covered well in the past and we look forward to reading each new issue.

We in the Capital City Leather Association, as a relatively new organization ourselves, can understand the difficulties involved when launching a new enterprise in this area. Our members represent various aspects of the local gay leather *Community* and feel, as do other gay minorities and alternative lifestyles, that we are often left out or under-represented by the local print media. We hope that the efforts of your newspaper will help rectify this situation.

We at CCLA look forward to a very productive relationship between our two organizations in the future. We wish you the best of luck in your new endeavor.

Brian Williams
President, Capital City Leather Assoc.
Voice Mail: (916) 733-2015

Dear *TSU*,

Please allow me to publicly express my profound gratitude for the donation of $452 made by the wonderful people at Unity Outreach/C.G.N.I.E. to the Lambda Letters Project. I attended the event at which this money was raised and they all obviously worked very hard to raise it. The following people deserve particular thanks for this donation: Terry Sidie, Ashley Harwood, Barry Berger, Courtney St. James and Mike Johnson. I truly appreciate the generous spirit they showed in making this donation.

Lambda Letters is one of only two state-wide organizations which lobby on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender *Community* and is the only one that provides a large, consistent volume of mail to legislators on our issues. Lobbyists for *Our Community* meet with legislators all the time to persuade them to support the bills that are good for *Our Community* and to oppose those that are bad for us. Often these bills are controversial and legislators are afraid to touch them unless it is clear that the voters in their districts will not throw them out of office for doing so.

Lambda Letters meets that challenge by creating a constant flow of mail from our members and friends in legislator's districts. Last year we delivered over 47,000 such letters to elected officials. In the first three months of this year, the project has already delivered over 23,000 letters to legislators about the bills that affect *Our Community*.

Lambda Letters provides its services at no charge to anyone. We depend on the generous support of those who are able to contribute to the project. As a result, the wonderful gift from Unity Outreach/ C.G.N.I.E. is deeply appreciated.

Lambda Letters strives to be there for the *Community* each and every day. We thank Unity Outreach/C.G.N.I.E. for being there for us.

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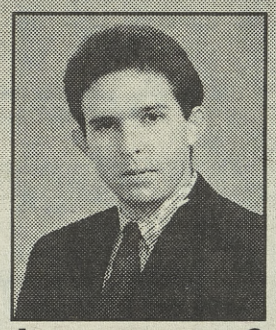

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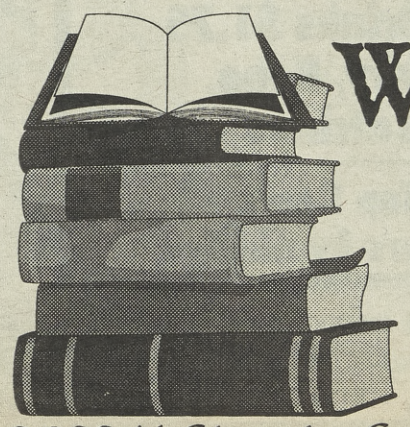

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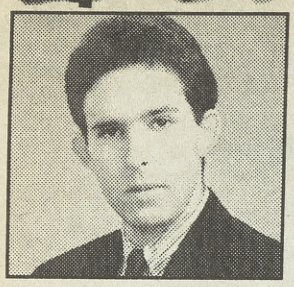

On the Other Hand

By Andrew Last
TSU Writer/Columnist

I am personally conflicted over the recent execution of the Florida woman who the press nicknamed "The Black Widow." On the one hand, the death penalty is always wrong, in all cases, forever and always, Amen.

On the other hand, one of the biggest arguments against the death penalty is the fact that it is imposed discriminately - one need only glance at the grossly disproportionate number of minority prisoners on death rows across the country to see that. This is just as true for gender as it is for race. I suppose that one way to make the process more "fair" would be to start killing more women. However, this strikes me as a rather phyrric victory.

"Of all the varieties of virtues, the most beloved is liberalism." Aristotle.

On the other hand, everyone knows that there are some criminals that cannot be rehabilitated, or returned, to live in a free society. What else can we do with the criminally insane, the predators, the recidivists that modern psychology can only shrug their shoulders over? Can they ever be allowed to live and work with the rest of us? ("Welcome to Chez Pierre. Jeffrey Dahmer will be your waiter this evening...")

On the other hand, who can we trust to decide who is fit for prison and who is not? Our legislature? The courts? Remember, this is the same government that sponsored the Savings and Loan fiasco; the same government that makes you stand in line for three hours at DMV, and yet somehow never issues a driver's license photo that looks anything like you. Folks, it's the same government, the same bureaucracy. People get tired, angry and frustrated enough to make bad decisions every day. The fact that we call some of them "Your Honor" and let men walk around in black dresses everyday (without pearls!) doesn't change anything.

TSU...

These views are solely the author's. They are not necessarily endorsed by this paper, its publisher, it's staff, or anyone besides the voices in the author's head.

"*This Side Up*, What's That Mean?"

By Mykee Hayes
TSU Contributing Writer

Have you heard the buzz around town about this new publication targeting *Our Community?* For months leading up to the March launch of *This Side Up,* Sacramento wondered what this new publication was all about. Fortunately, we were warmly welcomed by the *Community.*

With all the excitement and intrigue, the Publisher and staff are frequently asked, "where did you get that name and what does it mean?" Well, for all our friends and our new readers who've already inquired, and for those yet to pose this deep philosophical question, we offer this artful dodge.

Since the conception of the paper, we have worked very hard to be recognized as factual, fair, educational, inclusive, controversial, humorous, and most of all entertaining. To some, our mission of service and dedication promises new hope for *Our Community.* Of course, we realized this wouldn't be easy. But, what do you call a newspaper like that? After all, the "concept" of being gay means different things to different individuals within *Our Community.* The name, therefore, is ambiguous by design.

The name took on a (new) meaning after reading through the first issue. For me, it's like Sacramento's changing the line up and a new team is taking its turn at bat. Maybe they'll score some runs and change the game. Or, it's like hearing a new voice at the mic.

Whatever it means, I look forward to reading the next issue.

So What Do You Think "This Side Up" Means?

Upbeat, hopeful -- keeping a positive attitude towards the future -- which is something we all could use now.

-- Clinton Vigen

Continued page 5

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This Side Up newspaper Publisher and staff will be available at The Mirage the fourth Wednesday of each month between 7:00 and 9:00 pm to solicit your input on the newspaper or important issues affecting *Our Community.*

Can You Say That on TV?

By Michael R. Gorman
TSU Writer/Columnist

Like most Americans, I have grown more than weary of the recent sex scandal wars in Washington. This past year has been the only time I came close to being ashamed to be associated with the media. I even put my journalist persona in a temporary closet a few times when the subject came up at parties. This has not been a shining year for the American media. It was as if some evil sorcerer cast a spell, and suddenly reporters could no longer tell the difference between rumor, innuendo, gossip, and hard news. And the most quoted person of the year was that guy "anonymous source."

However, as I've had time to ruminate on the whole sordid scene since the dismissal of the Paula Jones case, I find that there are some incredibly positive results that have come out of this mess.

I am certain that the right wing gossip mongers who have turned the press release into a church social whisper fest were absolutely convinced that the American people would react to the sexual accusations of Jones and Tripp and Willey with abject horror. "Oh my God! He said 'penis' on the six o'clock news! 'Semen stains': can they say that on TV? Oral sex? Armageddon is upon us! Impeach the bastard!" Instead, the American public reacted with a measure of sophistication that, I admit, I did not think it had. Most people chuckled, told a few jokes, and then pondered the real issues of honesty, privacy, trust and harassment. They also recognized in the papers each morning and on the television news each night a graphic example of the dangers of confusing personal morality and public policy.

It was as if people were saying, "Sex in and of itself is not a bad thing, even sex that is different from what I might do. If a person is doing his job, it is none of my business what he does in bed, or on the kitchen table, even if he's the President. If the sex is consensual and is not a matter of serious dishonesty or harassment, then it is none of my business. Hillary's, yes, but not mine."

Call me a gay cheerleader, but I can't help thinking that all of our efforts to convince the public that gay sex, though in some ways different from the straight majority practices, is not a bad thing. We have pushed the envelope with our fights against sodomy laws and unwarranted "lewd conduct" arrests. We have been a force for making sex and "nontraditional" relationships a more comfortable part of the national dialog, and we're all healthier for it. We can all finally start to take Ann Landers' advice on such things, the best advice I have ever heard : MYOB.

Some have expressed fear that our comfort level with sex might translate into a lack of vigilance on such things as sexual harassment, rape, and sexual abuse. Happily, that does not seem to be the case. If anything, we seem to be developing a clearer sense of such things. The contrast between the current accusations against Clinton and the cases of Clarence Thomas and Bob Packwood, though subtle, have forced us to take a hard look at what constitutes sexual violation of another's rights. As Gloria Steinem said in a recent editorial, "The message of the feminist movement has always been, 'No means no,'" In the Clinton situation, most people seem to get it. Most believe that, even if Paula Jones' accusations are true, no sexual harassment occurred. She said no. He accepted no as an answer. Fini. That's that. There was no repetition of the offer, no job loss, no professional recriminations. The alleged behavior was not a crime. Crude maybe. Not what I would do in a million years, possibly. But illegal? No. Pretty sophisticated distinctions for "average" Americans to make. More and more people are beginning to genuinely understand that consensual sex is the business only of those involved, and that personal morality, if not harmful to others, should be given at least legal respect. That bodes well for gay rights in the coming century.

Kenneth Starr did not count on this kind of savvy in the American public, and he is suffering the consequences. People understand that the kind of strong-arm, Big Brother tactics that he has used on Monica Lewinsky and her mother, Susan McDougal, and countless other "witnesses" are the real threat to freedom and the American way. Similarly, Linda Tripp did not count on betrayal of friendship to count more in the minds of the public than where the President of the United States puts his penis.

Let us hope that this new awareness in the American psyche will soon begin to translate into an understanding that kicking men and woman out of the military because of their sexuality is just as much Big-Brotherism and moral judgment on identity and behavior that harms to one, that sodomy laws are harmful while the behavior they seek to end is not, that entertainers and sports figures can come out and be honest without interfering with our fantasy enjoyment of their work, that rejecting our children because they are gay or in other ways different from ourselves is wrong and abusive, that privacy rights are a good and American thing, that firing a gay person who is doing the job well should be viewed with disdain, that traditional doesn't necessarily mean good, and that tolerance of diversity whether in sexual practice, lifestyle, politics, morality, or religion is a good and healthy thing, even when we disagree deeply.

In the America I dream of, the saying on our coins is the old Wiccan admonition, "Do what you will, but do no harm." That, and Linda Tripp meets a nice drag queen to teach her how to do her hair and makeup and how to dish honestly.

TSU...

"This Side Up..." Continued from page 4

I think of the phrase meaning protecting from being broken or spilled. I think of the paper as keeping it all together...our dreams, *Our Community,* our lives. The paper watches and protects by keeping the people informed and telling the truth."

-- Tom Swanner

I always have a vision of us being up to bat. You know, everyone else had a turn and now this side's up, and we're gonna knock one out of the park.

-- Ben McKinney

I like it's ambiguity. It can mean whatever someone thinks it means. I think that's the whole philosophy of the paper. We're not telling *Our Community* what they should think about issues, We're presenting the facts and letting them draw their own conclusions.

-- Annabella

TSU...

Now we want to know what you think. Drop us a note; give us a call. If we like your explanation, we'll steal it and pretend we were thinking that all along. This Side Up newspaper, 920A 20th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. SactoPub@aol.com.

THIS SIDE UP

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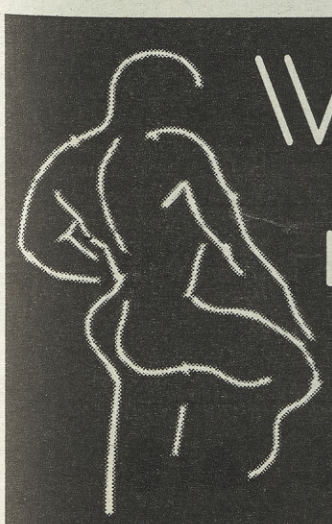

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Being Queer Doesn't Doom Us

By Anny Gately
TSU Youth Editor

The issue of suicide is one far too familiar to *Our Community's* youth. Nearly every member has thought about it, attempted it, or knows someone who has. In fact, *Our Community's* youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than any of our peers, accounting for 30 percent of all completed suicides in youth age 14 to 24. This is a very real problem, and needs addressing. There are so many reasons queer youth commit suicide — lack of role models, pressure to "act straight," family problems, harassment — take your pick. There are so many pressures on teenagers to begin with, while a number of *Our Community's* youth have difficulties handling the extra pressures that come with being queer.

We need to learn that being queer does not doom us to a life of depression and fear. There are other, not to mention better, alternatives to suicide. In fact, suicide should *never* be an option. People need to give this some serious thought. If you are in pain, if you are depressed, think about why. If people torment you because you're queer ask yourself "why do they do it?" Most likely because they are afraid. "What, afraid?" Most people are afraid of what they don't understand. So how can you make them understand? Well, you can't always, but education is the best weapon against ignorance. These people may not want you to exist, and they definitely don't want you to have a voice. **Defy them!** Speak out against homophobia. Become an active participant in your life. Do not give them the satisfaction of knowing another one of us bit the dust. There is strength in solidarity, that is, in *Community*. Write your representative or become active on-line. Find friends who support the person you really are, not ones that try to make you something you're not. But, most of all, be strong, and be proud. You can live a happy productive life.

If you are feeling suicidal, get help!

• Tell someone right away. Tell a trusted person how desperate you are feeling. If the first person you talk to isn't a help, call someone else. Keep trying. It is very important that you let people know how you are feeling.

• Even though you may not want to do this, make a decision to stay alive today, Just one day at a time. You can always rethink this decision if you want to, but if you die today, there will not be another tomorrow.

• ***Call for help NOW!*** There are many local suicide hotlines. If you live in the Sacramento Area call the Suicide Prevention Hotline, 24 hours a day at **(916) 368-3111.** There are also a number of Gay youth hotlines, and youth crisis lines that are there to help you when you are in need, or to refer you to someone that can help.

So if you're thinking about suicide, stop and call someone. Don't hesitate. And if you get any urge to hurt yourself - stop, count to a hundred-then call someone you trust. You can be happy; you can live. **I dare you.**

TSU...

Other Resources:
California Youth Crisis Line
1-800-843-5200

This number operates 24 hours a day, and provides crisis intervention and referral to teenagers in need.

Safe Place/Diogenes Youth Services
1-800-339-7177

This 24-hour hotline provides a shelter and crisis intervention counseling for youths ages 10 to 17, and provides family counseling.

LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center)
(415) 863-3636 or 1-800-246-PRIDE

Provides an information line as well as peer counseling.

School Is No *Mentos* Commercial

By Steve Williams
TSU Youth Editor

And Brianna Pruett
TSU Contributing Writer

For *Our Community*'s youth, going to school is an experience that can be tolerable at best, and hellacious at worst. Both of us are high school students. We both attend schools that are predominately white and upper-middle class. The people we go to school with tend to be sheltered and have no firsthand experience with truly alternative concepts of people. As a result, their reaction to a fellow student coming out in school tends to be negative.

The students we attend school with tend to lack any insight on any subject beyond their own lives. One girl we know said, "I know I'm sheltered, but it's better than living in the ghetto and having to be afraid of guns and stuff." Stuff? Deep.

The students' lack of understanding of people beyond themselves, is part of a bigger problem--the blindfolded culture that is uninformed, unaware, and uncaring. The students we attend school with are afraid--we hear it every day in their casual use of the words "fag" and "dyke." Something that is different than what they have been brought up with is a threat. But by reading this article, you are in a position to help reverse their homophobia.

If you are a queer youth in school, but you are still closeted for whatever reason, you still have the power to make changes. By calling just one person on their homophobic words or actions, you can give the message that homophobia is not acceptable. If you are out in school, you are likely already doing this. But, if you are the only out youth in your school, you have to be careful--when your fellow students think of *Our Community*, they will base their opinions on what they think of you. Even if you are no longer in school, you can make a difference by not tolerating blatant homophobia.

We don't expect the world to turn into a giant *Mentos* commercial, full of smiling faces giving a thumbs-up and saying, "Hey, gay is OK!" But we do hope to change the world into a place where we can stand up and be ourselves without fear of oppression or the violence.

TSU...

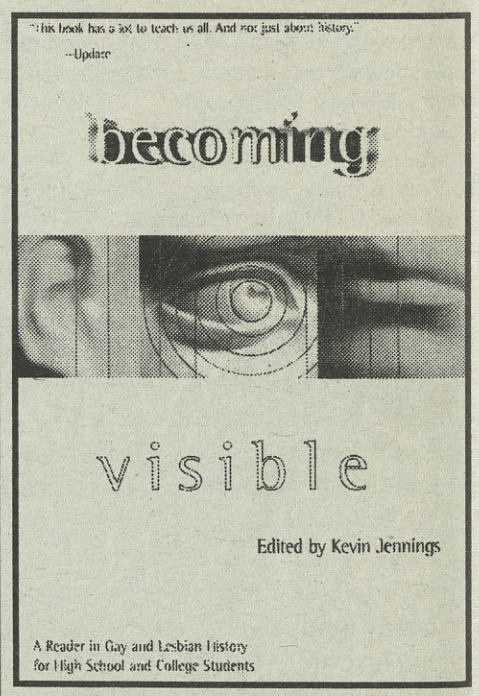
Becoming Visible

Review By Anny Gateley
TSU Youth Editor

Released 1994 by Alyson Publications

$11.95

Socrates, Alexander the Great, Henry David Thoreau, Leonardo da Vinci, Willa Cather, Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolfe, Eleanor Roosevelt; all of these historical people have had important same-sex relationships. But this is not something many high school, or even college, history classes mention. In fact, the role, treatment, and even existence of *Our Community* is something completely left out of history courses. *Becoming Visible*, a book written as a history text book for high school and college students, means to change this. It is full of stories of queer life in every aspect of history; from the pre-modern societies of Greece, Rome, China and early America; to the beginnings of the modern gay movement, World War II, McCarthyism and Stonewall; to the lives of gays and lesbians in the 1980's and 90's. Each segment is followed up by a set of questions making this a true textbook. However, this book should be read by everyone, in and out of the classroom.


"This book has a lot to teach us all. And not just about history."
--Update
becoming
visible
Edited by Kevin Jennings
A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History
for High School and College Students

Our Community is an important part of history and a part that has been ignored for too long.

TSU...

Something About Rage

By K. R. Lapidus
TSU Health Editor

The word "rage" appears in standard dictionaries and, interestingly enough, in psychiatric dictionaries as well. In ordinary language the word means "fury, violent or intense anger. " In psychiatry it can be used to mean the overpowering, out of control feeling of infantile anger. That is what I experienced recently in a parking lot in the East Bay-someone's infantile and out of control rage directed at me.

A Saturday. Early afternoon. A dry moment in a day of off and on hard rain. I am driving down the aisle of a parking lot looking for a space. The parking lot is busy but not jammed. The aisle I am driving down is a single lane with diagonal slots to my right. I am going in the correct direction to pull into a parking space. A couple of cars ahead of me, a minivan backs out. There isn't a car in front of me, so I pull in.

Suddenly a blue sedan I hadn't seen screeches to a halt with it's nose about six inches from the driver's side of my car. I look into the face of the driver, a young man with pimples and a wispy-haired girlfriend next to him. He's yelling and screaming at me. She has her head down. His windows are up and mine are up so I can only hear a faint voice sound, none of the words he is saying are clear. But his message is pretty direct and not difficult to lip read. He is swearing at me, shaking his fists and, at the same time, gesturing for me to roll down my window.

I'm not in a hurry, and, not being in a mood to fight with anyone, get clobbered by anyone or even trade choice words with anyone, I wait in my car for his tantrum to end.

But, this young man has a different idea. He is in a hurry to confront me. He jumps out of his car. He is still alternately shaking his fists and making "roll down your window" gestures at me. He presses his face against the window on my side of the car and continues to swear. His vocabulary is small, but his message is now, in case I hadn't gotten it before, that I stole his parking place on purpose.

Suddenly we're on a different plain. He started out being angry because someone took a parking place he had wanted. Now he's worked himself into a righteous anger. Someone knowingly and blatantly took the parking place he was entitled to. He keeps reiterating that he saw me see him. "You're lying," he yells through the glass, "I saw you see me. I saw you."

Now his anger can't be refuted. God is on his side. The young man knows I stole his parking place. I am a liar if I say I didn't. He knows the truth: I saw him waiting for the place and took it anyway.

I refuse to get out of my car or roll the window down. He stamps around, swearing at me, looking toward the girl in his car and at passers by for some kind of support or approval. He finally screams a string of foul names, forgetting, I guess, that sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me, gets back in his car, slams the door and peels rubber out of the parking lot.

The young woman with wispy hair never looks at him. I don't know if she said anything to him at the beginning, before he almost slammed into the side of my car, but once he starts yelling at me she doesn't say a word. The pimple-faced young man feels entitled. He was wronged, he believes. No one could pull into his parking place unaware that it was reserved for him. It is this sense of being entitled that fuels his anger and justifies his loss of control. He was entitled. I came between him and what he was entitled to. Therefore, he is without responsibility for any words or actions which follow. I'm afraid that he'll bash in my window, or beat dents into my ear. I am afraid that if I get out, he might physically attack me. I see in this young man, as he waves his fists and shouts, the making of a wife-beater, a dog-kicker, a man who was very, very close to using violence, who could have knocked out my window in the blink of an eye and felt good about it. This time something caught him, something held him back. But will it again? If he could be pushed this close to using physical action to solve a problem by the mere (albeit not to him) taking of a parking place, what little more could cause him to lose that final thread of restraint?

We read news stories describing violence everyday. We read editorials and psychological analyses and novels about what causes violence. We talk about it with our friends and co-workers, lovers, domestic partners, and our children. But it took this small incident in a week when children had killed children, to remind me and to frighten me. We are not learning how to acknowledge our own anger without unleashing it. We hurl ourselves, like Zeus' thunderbolts, at the person we hold responsible whenever something doesn't go the way we want it to, or when someone's inadvertent or clumsy action prevents us from doing or having something we think we are entitled to.

Nothing happened to me, or my car. The young man left without inflicting any physical damage. The only thing he did was to omit enough hot air to fill a balloon and to scare me. What is frightening and daunting to me is that he came so close to an irreversible act over a mere parking place. What will push him next, and who will his victim be? A man walking out of a gay bar? A quadriplegic who has a bladder accident in public? A dog running down the side of the road? His own child? Trapped in the middle of anger, he couldn't have heard reason. Afterward, he didn't want to hear. The unwieldy belief that something he was entitled to was taken away will persist and help fuel the next righteous outburst. These are times when the most reasonable, gentle and kind individuals get battered by rage and cannot perform acts of physical or verbal aikido to deflect it. Those times seem to be happening more and more frequently for less and less reason. And they are not good for our health.

TSU...

Special Announcements

A Short Hiatus for Our Family Page...

We regret that *This Side Up's* Family page is absent in our second issue. Both Christina Fonseca, *TSU* Family Editor, and Dan Uhrich, *TSU* Writer/Columnist for our Family page have been focused exclusively on separate personal and family health matters. Our thoughts and love are with Christina, Dan, and their families. *This Side Up's* Family page will return next month.

Jim Long, Publisher
***This Side Up* newspaper**

SEE

Spiritual Essence Exchange

A reading and discussion group of intergender members of *Our Community*, gathered to stimulate spiritual dialog and religious synchronism.

SEE is an intellectual search for the essence of spirituality and how that relates to the greater *Community*.

Sunday, April 26, 1998 @ 6:00pm, the Open Book, 910 21st Street

Art Opening

Sacramento artist, Tony Ferrante, will have a show for his paintings, along with Nelson Passas photography, at Gallery El Darado at 6180 Main St. El Dorado, CA, from April 25 through June 29, 1998. A reception for the artists will be held Friday, April 24, from 6 to 8pm.

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Crossroads

On Learning to Say Good Bi

By Andrea Gaiteri
TSU Contributing Writer

I used to curse my sexuality. I wished I were straight. I wished I were gay. Instead, I was, by many accounts, merely wishy-washy. The stigma of bisexuality can be a cruel reality. In a world that likes clear choices, the non-decisiveness of my sexuality is often seen as weakness of character. However, as I've grown older, wiser, and more sexually mature, I've begun to view bisexuality as I experience it. Now I can delight in it, explain it to myself, and advocate it. That's right. Advocate. Not justify. None of us should ever place ourselves or find ourselves placed in a position where we must justify our sexuality for anyone.

I didn't when I first came out. I've always preferred to think of myself as coming across rather than coming out. I've learned that bisexuality as a bridge between heterosexuality and homosexuality. It's not a fence, as some are inclined to imagine. I cherish the bridge, its crossings, and the river of loving that flows beneath it. The river is the reward after all.

My sexuality allows me to revel in the distinct emotional and physical beauty of both men and women. There is no room for weakness in my character. Rather, I find myself strengthened by the challenge of loving women and men equally, yet differently. Internally, I feel no difference in my love for either sex; however, externally, I have discovered vast differences in the expression of that love. Being bisexual has, for me, led to a greater appreciation of the complexities and privileges of loving any other human being— male or female. There is such a wondrous responsibility in love. I feel I've been doubly blessed by the myriad of learning opportunities I've been offered.

Bisexuality is not about not being able to make a decision whether to love a woman or a man. Bisexuality is not needing to make that decision. Bisexuality is the freedom to love any other human being beyond sex or sexuality. What a gift that is.

TSU...

SACRAMENTO AIDS FOUNDATION

Heart to Heart

Support group for gay and bisexual men with HIV

FREE

Tuesdays: 6:30 - 8:00 pm

1330 21st Street, Ste. 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 448-2437, ext. 213
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WOMEN'S HIV+ SUPPORT GROUPS

SACRAMENTO AIDS FOUNDATION

Mireya A. Herrera M.S.W.
L.C.S.W., C.G.P.
Facilitator

For over six years the Women's HIV+ Day Support Group has provided a safe and confidential environment for women to come together and support each other as they live with HIV/AIDS. The new evening support group will provide the opportunity for working women to have a chance to join a group and break the isolation. Come and learn about health, nutrition, legal issues, medication and most of all get support as you continue to cope and live with the virus.

Day Support Group

When: Every Tuesday, 12:00 - 1:45 p.m.
Place: Social Hall, St. Frances Church 1112 26th Street Sacramento
Cost: FREE - Childcare provided
Call: 363-5924

Evening Support Group

When: 2nd and 4th Wed. of each month 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Place: Sacramento AIDS Foundation 1330 21st Street, Sacramento
Cost: FREE
Call: 363-5924

Dear Amazon...

Dear Amazon,
I am astounded by the amount of "married" men in Our Community who consider it acceptable to "play around." While I am certainly no prude when it comes to open marriages, I have never been exposed to this type of behavior before. What's with married men?

Propositioned

Dear Propositioned,
There may be countless reasons for partnered men choosing to break their commitments and seek outside companionship, be they condoned by their significant other, or otherwise. We have probably heard many of the possibilities: lack of self-esteem, distraction from personal problems or dissatisfaction with job, finances, and other life choices. As members of Our Community, we are also faced with the destructive forces of homophobia, both externally and internally, derived from the pain from nonacceptance, unfair treatment, invisibility, hostility, and violence, both physical and emotional. This has incredibly detrimental effects on our everyday life and life choices. Don't get me wrong, I by no means condone infidelity. You may wish to steer clear of folks who may be seeking another partner or "fling" in order to keep the drama level in your life to a minimum...unless of course you are writing a new episode for "The Queer and the Restless".

Good luck
»Amazon«

Dear Amazon
I think I am a closet Bi-sexual. I have been out in the gay Community for a number of years and have made a respectable name for myself as a gay man. I have always felt an attraction to women, but it has been a platonic attraction until the last year. More and more I find myself attracted to women, yet when I express this to friends, I notice that they get very uncomfortable. I realize this may sound dumb to many and I'm not even sure what I'm asking. I just need some advice on the entire situation.
Closet Case

Dear Closet Case,
Change, growth, and exploration can be exciting, scary, and challenging, both for the one experiencing these events, and for those who support them. For many of us, change may be thought of as just plain frightening, and to be avoided at all costs. Your friends may be frightened for you, if they anticipate that your exploration of feelings toward women may end in the disaster of heartbreak. Worse yet, they may fear the "disaster" may be your choice to date women! Often times when our friends embark on a journey of exploration, we may fear that their growth will end in a growing apart of the relationship.

Regardless of your friends' discomfort, you may wish to find someone who can offer support without the complications of fearing the loss of your friendship, such as a mentor or counselor. You may also wish to explore your reasons for your "blooming" attraction to women. This may be something you may wish to explore, or may possibly be a completely different issue...one that does not end with you and a member of the opposite sex holding hands and walking into the sunset! Don't tell Billy Graham, though...he would probably be really bummed.

Happy explorations
»Amazon«

Dear Amazon,
My girlfriend and I have been dating since I was 15 and she was 16. I just turned 17 and in a few weeks she will turn 18. We have been having sex for the past six months, but now if we have sex, I will be considered a minor and she could go to jail. We've talked about celibacy for the next year until I am 18 too, but that doesn't seem to be a very good option for either of us. We are responsible, in the same graduating class - It just doesn't make sense 10 months is the difference between what's right or wrong. What do you think?

Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,
Tricky tricky...technically, you are correct. Sex with a minor is statutory rape, and quite against the law. Then on the other hand, what you are doing with your girlfriend behind closed doors is probably still on the books as illegal in at least three "Billy-Bob" states...hopefully California is not one of them, but, you never know with Wilson in office.

I would consider both your parent(s). Are you out to them? Do they know of your relationship? Are they supportive? If they are parade-walking PFLAGers, you probably won't have to practice the celibacy thing...unless you just really want to be a super law-abiding citizen...albeit a snuggle-deprived one. If any of the adult guardians involved are homophobic and/or have attempted to keep you two apart in the past, you may wish to choose the legal route.

Hope you can make a comfortable and relatively pain-free choice!
»Amazon«

Dear Amazon,
I am in a wonderful relationship. The problem I'm having is that outside forces are trying to pull us apart or at least open our relationship. It's gotten so bad that we've pulled away from our regular social activities. What's the best way to handle this problem? These friends know we're monogamous, but they think that can't happen anymore in this day and time.

Just Want the One I Have

Dear Just Wanting,
I tried to visualize the forces that are trying to open your relationship, and it got kind of scary. I'm not sure what you mean, but, if you're saying that there are folks approaching you for a bit of "outside-of-your-relationship" fun, I would ask what you have done to establish your commitment? Sometimes we believe that we are being very firm in setting boundaries, while others may not perceive it as such. It may be that you're setting firm boundaries, and the "others" are not receiving your signals, or possibly don't care!

If you've covered all these bases, it may be that you and your partner may choose to expand your socializing horizons to include groups that are more respectful of relationship boundaries. Have you considered joining a lesbian and gay couples' group? Try contacting the Greater Sacramento Area Couples (GSAC).

Good luck and good monogamizing
»Amazon«

Amazon Lee is a feminist counselor, public speaker and author of 'Warrior Womoon: Feminist Healing and Spirituality in the New Millennium.' She can be contacted at This Side Up newspaper, 920 20th Street, Sacramento CA 95814 or E-Mail at SactoPub@aol.com Subject: Amazon Lee

Just As I Am

By Rev. Freda Smith
TSU Writer/Columnist

"Who am I — really? " " What does it all mean?" "What difference does it all make?" These are questions that lead us onto the spiritual path of our lives.

Recently, I was talking again to the young man — with whom I discuss such things. Because of some issues that spoke of incompetence at best and possible betrayal and treachery at worst, we were discussing, "what is our role in all this?"

Of course, in a world outside of our inner spiritual tuning forks, it is all simple. "Tit for Tat." "Get even — first, if possible." "Look out for Number One."

Inner spiritual tuning forks? Now what does that mean? Did I lose you there?

You know how a tuning fork works. It vibrates and gives off a tone when the appropriate note is struck. Part of our spiritual path involves finding, recognizing, and heeding our spiritual tuning forks. Going deep within ourselves and reflecting on the deep springs of meaning which are there in each of us.

Sometimes we discover these resonating tuning forks in a crisis. Hopefully, it is a crisis of identity. "Who am I?" " What is true?" "Of what value is love?" I believe our crisis of identity is a part of making our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered community so deeply spiritual. And so suspicious of what the world would define spirituality as being.

In another column — in another time — I can talk about the results of our suspicions of the world's definition of spirituality.

But for now, I am talking to the young man with whom I discuss such things. And I am talking about an actual concern. What do we do?

The answer, I believe, is that we, the gay-bi-lesbian-transgender community of Sacramento must seize the moral high ground in any or all decisions which are before us. After all, we have only known who we are because we responded to an inner resonance of truth, and love, and — yes, even justice — which set us apart from others in the world . It was this that led us to find each other and form a community.

Somehow — although we have heard so many discordant tones that sometimes it seems we have almost lost our note — we still in our best hour have joined together for a higher spiritual purpose. Our response to AIDS, to fair legislation, to safe education, are all based upon our common commitment to our highest values. Our response to each other, to the preservation of our organizations, to our ethical obligations of debt and promise, must also reflect our highest and best selves — because this is the fabric of our being.

As a young person — in the arid, cultural desert of Pocatello, Idaho — I belonged to a group of young people who attended the weekly wrestling matches at the National Guard Armory. Every Wednesday we attended the theater of professional wrestling values. The role of a villain was mandatory. The villain pulled hair, grabbed trunks, punched in the wrong places when the referee was looking elsewhere — and firmly established himself (rarely herself) as worthy to be utterly despised. Finally, the hero — who was valiantly losing by playing fair — would lose his/her temper and lash back using all of the negative tactics of the villain. The crowd went wild!!!

There is something within that responds to a "tit for tat" ethic. We get wildly excited and want to respond in kind. But what we are feeling is not something that will serve us well in the long run. What we are feeling is a very thin reward for what we lose in the bargain.

An old gospel hymn speaks, I believe to *Our Community*. "Draw back the curtain of memory now and then. Show me where you brought me from. And where I might have been."

Our Community, while far from being perfect, is still a profoundly spiritual and powerful force. Together, we can do anything but fail.

TSU...

Rev. Elder Freda Smith is the Senior Pastor of River City MCC Cathedral of Promise. Rev. Smith received the 1996 "Woman of the Year Award", and the "Women in History Award for Courage". She may be reached care of* This Side Up *or by E-Mail at Revfsmith@aol.com.

I Walk The Old Path

By ButterDragon
TSU Contributing Writer

This is a brief account of my own spiritual journey. Please understand that it is in no way intended as an indictment of other belief systems, for much of the bedrock of my current spirituality is the belief that no one has the right to dictate another's spiritual path. This is simply a history of mine. Do with it as you will.

I was a committed Catholic altar boy. I attended the school founded by the first American saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton. My room was filled with holy cards and statues and crucifixes, and miraculous medals and scapulas and rosary beads. As an adult I was a eucharistic minister, a lector, a youth leader, a choir leader, and a parish council member. In college I took on leadership roles in campus ministries that exposed me to all of the major Christian denominations. I could quote the Bible with the best of them. I eventually left Catholicism for a nondenominational fundamentalist church, converting in a dramatic "born again" experience in which I accepted Jesus as my "lord" and "master." As a lay minister, I led Bible studies, taught Sunday school, planned services, baptized, counseled, participated in prison ministries, and evangelized regularly (and quite successfully) through the arts. The cross was the central image of my life. All of this is to say that I had a very intimate and sincere involvement with the theology and practices of Christianity.

However, I also never stopped being the little boy who used to sneak up into the Appalachian woods and feel the powers emanating from the trees and the streams and the mushrooms, and from places unseen. I loved them as I loved all living things. I felt a kinship verging on oneness. I called the powers fairies before I learned that such things were unacceptable in the world of the church. When I did learn that, I simply tucked the fairies into hiding, for I could not dismiss them. I turned my love of forest creatures into an admiration for Saint Francis of Assisi, and I aspired to speak with the birds as he did. I kept this gentle boy separated from the harsher elements of my religion: the bloody torture and death of Jesus, my inherent sinfulness, the drowning of those not on the Ark, the holy wars, the killing of every man woman and child....

Eventually it was impossible to reconcile that little boy's desire to love all things with the theology that told me I had to accept that some are unacceptable. My religion was, to me, a good guys versus bad guys scenario that never really worked for me, even in childhood cops and robbers games. (That robber, after all, was really my older brother. That Indian to my cowboy was my best friend Debbie.) When I finally rebelled and refused to separate the sheep from the goats, in myself or in others, I became a stranger in the church. And when I came out of the closet by embracing that "goat" part of me that is a gay man I was told I could either continue to hate and revile that part of me, or I could leave. I left.

After the loss of what I saw as my spiritual home, I tried for years to deny all

Continued page 21

God Misses You...Come Home

Rev. Freda Smith
364-4325
http://www.sacweb.com/mccsac
E-Mail: revfsmith@aol.com

River City Metropolitan Community Church Cathedral of Promise
Rev. Freda Smith, Pastor
Rev. Ed Sherriff, Associate
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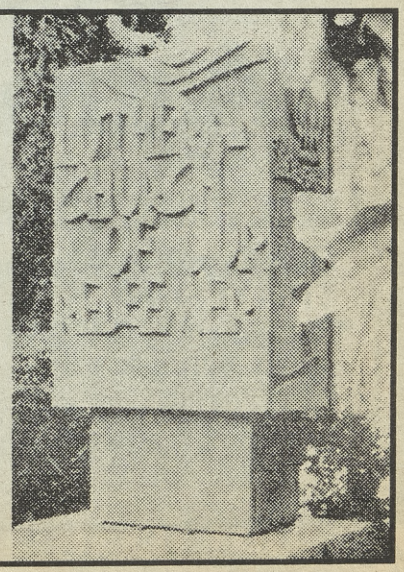


Gay Games Unite Cultures!

By Annabella
TSU Contributing Writer

As most everyone who is gay-ware of the latest news about *Our Community* knows, this is the year of the 5th Gay Games that will be held in Amsterdam, the gay Mecca of Europe.

As with our Olympics counterpart, the Gay Games is an international event for sports competition, which is held every four years. For those who do not know, it had begun in 1982 by Dr. Tom Waddell, "to encourage the emancipation and integration of lesbian women and gay men around the world."

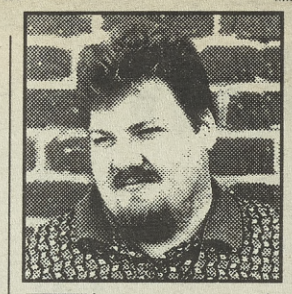
In 1994, the 4th Gay Games was held in New York City, where waves of *Our Global Community* flowed through the streets in wave after beautiful wave. There is no doubt that for one week this year, from August 1 through August 8, Amsterdam will appear to be the Planet of the Gays.

The official slogan for the Gay Games in 1998 is 'Friendship through Culture and Sports. Culture will have a spotlight on it equal to sports in this progressive, and liberal, European city. There will be a large variety of programs, festivals and exhibitions available to the enthusiastic visitor attending this grand, gay event.

Anticipate, those of you who are going... imagine, those of you who are not... lesbians and gays of different nationalities, from around the world, gathered openly in a place with a common purpose. Consider that for many, this will be the first, and probably only opportunity to be in a climate of social tolerance; a time and place where they will not have to cloak their identities.

In its efforts to make this a genuinely, global event, the Outreach program has been formed for Gay Games '98 in Amsterdam, "which (will help) people from developing countries in particular, who don't have the financial means themselves to come to Amsterdam... to contact, and if possible, financially support participants from these countries that have been under-represented at Gay Games until now." Furthermore, "Since the emphasis here is on human rights, Amnesty International is working with...the Outreach program."

Continued page 21



Enemy Of The State: Gays In The Holocaust

By Matthew Burlingame
TSU Writer/Columnist

There are many who still assert the horrors of the Holocaust are nothing more than Jewish Propaganda. There are then those that believe, a faction of modern day Jews among them, that homosexuals are using the legacy of inhumanity to further a campaign of obtaining Civil Rights, by claiming a bond of injustice with the Jewish people. The recent release of the stage play *Bent* to cinema screens has brought forth a new-found interest in the history of Gays in the Holocaust. For others, less sympathetic, it can be summed up in the quote of a woman standing outside the theater: "Locking up the queers was the only good thing they did."

In the book *The Pink Swastika*, revisionists go beyond the mere claim that the internment and persecution of gays did not occur, to assert that the Nazi party itself was a homosexual organization. Co-Author Kevin Abrams further claims that if any prisoners were indeed put to death in concentration camps, it was at the hands of homosexuals.

While the extermination of over 6 million Jews is foremost in the minds of the general public, historians, too, rarely acknowledge the 5.5 million non-Jews that perished under similar circumstances and often under the same rationale of Aryan racial purity. Among these political prisoners, Jehovah's witnesses, Sinti and Roma (Gypsies), and regular criminals is over 100,000 homosexuals, referred to by Third Reich Commanders as "Enemy of the State."

In the coming months we will present a series of articles reliving the horrors of homosexual persecution at the hands of the Third Reich. We will take you to the beginning of Germany's gay movement and follow it with first hand accounts, as they go from the jails, to the ash ridden death camps. We will explore the characters who played the supporting as well as the starring roles in one of histories darkest times and hopefully gain the understanding as to why after so many years, so few persecuted homosexuals have not come forward to tell their tales.

TSU...

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THIS SIDE UP Newspaper

Making a Difference...

By Mykee Hayes
TSU Just Do Something Editor

It is our conviction that one person can make a difference. This is taking place in our *Community* as we speak.

As stated in our first issue, we are dedicating this page to help organize the volunteer pool in Sacramento and its surrounding areas.

The listings found on this page are the first in a series that will be featured ever month. We will provide detailed listings of local organizations along with brief summaries of volunteer positions that need to be filled. Our readers, or anyone who is interested in volunteering and making a difference, can easily scan through the information or make a few calls to see where they can best help to serve in the *Community*.

This Side Up will do its part by sponsoring events...

This Side Up will do its part by sponsoring picnics, softball games, pizza parties, and other events to recognize outstanding volunteers. In the spirit of unity we encourage other local business and restaurants to join in and do their part in supporting our volunteers and organizations who are hard at work serving *Our Community*.

TSU...

Samaritan Center

3230 Broadway, Sacramento CA 95817
916/454-5019
Rev. Ed Sherriff, Director

Coffeeshop: *Between 7am - 1pm, 6 days per week, serving coffee and donuts, some minor cooking for lunch.*

Food Program: *Between 9am - 2pm, Mon. Weds. Fri., box and give away food, light paperwork involved.*

Drivers: *Between 6:30am Tuesday, 7am Thurs. and Fri., food and furniture pick up and delivery.*

Thrift Store: *Between 9am - 3pm, 6 days per week, unpack and organize incoming donations.*

Breaking Barriers

1722 J Street, Sacramento CA 95814
916/447-2437
Contact Aaron Wright

Transit Partners: *Open hours, 7 days per week, drive clients to doctor's appointments, etc. Must have valid drivers license, Insurance and car.*

Chore Workers: *Open hours, 7 days a week, light house keeping, yard work, moving.*

One to One: *Emotional support on an individual basis, requires special training.*

Office Assistance: *Open hours, 5 days a week, Phones, filing, etc.*

Sacramento Aids Foundation

1330 21st Street, Ste. 100, Sacramento, CA 95814
916/448-1437
Contact: Jackie Nelson

Clerical Support: *9am - 5pm, 5 days per week, office duties, cleaning, etc.*

Emotional Support: *Mandatory 6 hrs per week, One year commitment, emotional support on individual basis, special training required.*

Chore Workers: *4 hrs per week, Mandatory 6 month commitment, cleaning, yard work, pet walking, laundry.*

Transportation Assistance: *3 hours per week, Mandatory 6 month commitment, drive clients to doctors appointments, grocery shopping, pharmacy.*

Massage and Reiki Practitioners: *2 clients per month.*

Legal Assistance: *Minimum 2 hours per month, Licensed attorneys only.*

Rountree Library Committee

Contact: Michael Bennett at Sacmwb@pacbell.net

Projects: *Spring Pride Book Faire, Freedom Fair, Rainbow Festival*

Organization: *File cabinets and vertical files, labeling, address changes, periodical organization and record keeping*

Regular Positions: *People willing to take on Board of Director roles, Volunteer Coordinator, library staff. Person with editing skills to help with policies and procedures, publications and correspondence. Person to regularly read reviews of books, media, websites, etc. to add to list of resources the library should have.*

To get your organization information in our list volunteer opportunities, please mail to This Side Up newspaper, 920A 20th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

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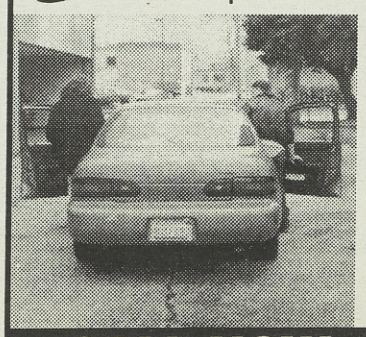

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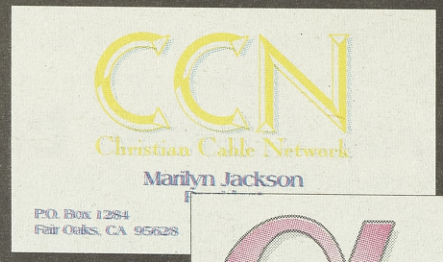

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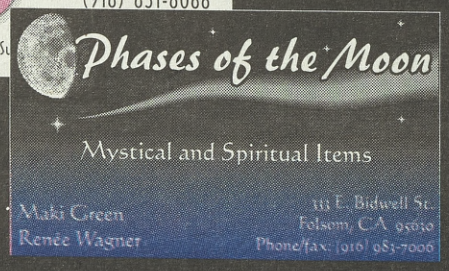

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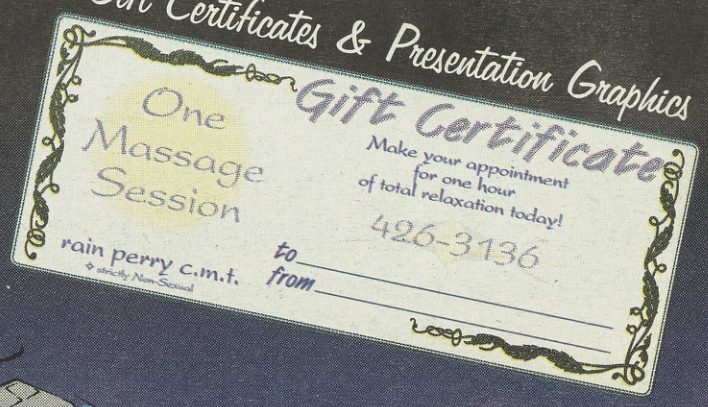

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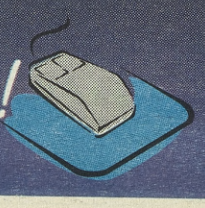

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"Town Hall" Meeting A Success

By Matthew Burlingame
TSU Production Editor

On Saturday, March 28th, a group of approximately 40 concerned *Community* members and business leaders met to discuss the current status of the Lambda Community Center and the Lambda Community Fund as well as the lack of visible leadership in *Our Community.*

Donna Matthews and Kimberly Weer, Lambda Center volunteers, opened the meeting with a brief explanation of why they felt compelled to organize the gathering now. "With the current difficulties with the Center, we were afraid if we didn't hold this meeting now, there would be no way to bring everyone together at a later date."

After opening remarks, attendees were free to express any views surrounding the LCF and LCC. There was no formal agenda for the meeting.

Though invited guests Reverend Jerry Sloan and journalist/H.E.A.L. Coordinator Marghe Covino were unable to attend, local well-knowns such as *Faces* Terry Sidie, *Being Gay Today* Host and former LCC Executive Director, Joanna Cassese and head of the River City MCC Reverend Freda Smith, were among the crowd.

A few of the Community Groups officially and unofficially represented at the gathering included C.G.N.I.E., The Valley Bears, Sacramento Gender Association, G.L.S.E.N., Freedom Fair Committee, *Rountree* Conservation Committee, Gay Men's Support Group, Lambda Aids Project and the GLBT Youth Group. Also in attendance was a representative from San Diego's Billy DeFrank Center.

The opening question from the floor was a simple one: who is responsible? "Before the LCF Board can ask the *Community* to once again support them, we need to hear them publicly take responsibility for the mistakes they have made," one person asserted. "But more than admitting where they failed and making the public aware of it, they need to make us aware of how they intend to correct those mistakes and avoid making them in the future."

Local writer and *TSU* Columnist, Michael Gorman followed the comment with, "the secretive attitude must go. There are always rumors of wrongdoing. Sometimes they're true, sometimes they're not. If everything is out in the open, then everyone will know the truth. We have got to end the continuous rumors and secrecy. And answer the phone." Others expressed similar concerns.

Clifford Carte, a current volunteer at the LCC gave a moving answer to these comments. "In the first two days that I volunteered, I helped an older woman who had lost her job, had no money and had no one to turn to. From a binder with a list of resources inside, I gave her 12 places to go to find services. I spoke with a woman who's 12-year-old daughter had been raped and she didn't know where to turn for help. I spoke with a young man who was dealing with coming out and I assured him that, yes, there was still a Youth Group.

"We can't throw this away. If we want someone to blame, we have to blame ourselves. It's all our fault and we need to do something about this."

"Yes, there are times the phone can't be answered - whether it's because we're on the other line or because we have to leave for a few minutes to take care of someone who walked in needing help. But I can tell you that I was there for two days and I answered that phone. And I will be there many more days and I will always answer the phone. But we need people to be there when those that are there now, can't be."

Robbie Raaf, owner of a *gay pride* jewelry company, generously offered to pay for the installation of a second phone line.

Again and again the words "money," "people" and "communication" were used. "But it's just not there," one man complained. "I personally am strongly in favor of a membership [organization]. I've been involved with nonprofits before and we relied on member dues to pay a large number of our costs."

"Membership seems to undermine the goal of the Center," another community member spoke after the meeting. "It should be for everyone regardless. Membership offers special privileges and that's not what a true "Community" Center is about."

"We need to turn to the nation, to other groups in our larger Community," said one woman, a Shaman and former corporate troubleshooter. "We must sit with them, explain honestly our trouble and ask them for help."

"How can we ask for help," a *Community* member whispered quietly. "We have to give them a reason to help us."

Several raised the issue of bankruptcy.

"Bankruptcy should be a last resort," came several replies. "Vendors will not want to do business with *Our Community* if what is perceived to many as the 'core' of *Our Community* goes under leaving $60,000 is unpaid debts to vendors."

Joanna Cassese responded by asking: "Who's going to be responsible for the debt? I know, I have a sense of pride and *Community* responsibility. I would feel personally responsible in helping to get that debt taken care of. Regardless of how it got there, it reflects on all of us."

The C.G.N.I.E. representative raised the point: "We need to ask ourselves, do we as the Sacramento gay community want to attempt - over 4 to 5 years - to liquidate a $92,000 debt? We wouldn't have time to do any type of programs or outreach to anyone. Tackling this debt would consume all *Our Community's* time for the next several years."

"We've got to get off the blame game," Jim Long, Publisher of *TSU* and President of *Civic Action Alliance* addressed the crowd. "It's not going to solve the problems at hand. In my view, we should attempt a two-pronged approach. First, we should appoint an emergency overseeing committee of *Community* leaders that are 'above reproach' - that have the respect and trust of most every *Community* member. This committee should oversee the bankruptcy and dissolution of the existing 501(c)(3), known as the Lambda Community Fund, and at the same time be forming a 501(c)(3) that will replace the old one. One with updated and non-exclusionary bylaws and a new mission that fits the current needs of *Our Community*. It should also oversee selecting a Board of Directors for the new organization that have the necessary skills and experience to get the job done.

"Any new organization will only end up having to deal with the backlash of the LCF, particularly if it's closed while still owing money," one *Community* member commented.

"No one is going to trust the LCF now anyway," came yet another comment.

"IRS debt can be negotiated down and most vendors and groups that are owed funds will work with the debtor to recover at least some amount of the money they are owed," one business owner stated. "What we really need is a committee that will take the responsibility of getting the information of exactly what money is owed, who it is owed to and then propose a plan of attack to speak with vendors, work out details and a time line of how long it will take to dissolve the remaining debt. Then a Board should be appointed that will have the ability to fund-raise and meet the time line."

LCF Board member Donovan Thompson spoke briefly. "I'm here as a member of this *Community,* not a representative of the LCF Board. And I'd like to add that I'm saddened to stand here and feel like it's me against you. We're all in this together.

"But we have to ask ourselves tough questions. Are we willing to commit to an organization that does something? And if so, what do we want it to do? I came onto the LCF Board with visions of starting outreach programs, but we weren't able to do any of that because we were too busy fighting financial fires and bailing water to keep the Center afloat."

Continued page 21

Civic Action Alliance

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Civic Action Alliance is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation providing information and other support to anyone on avenues of citizen involvement. Civic Action Alliance volunteers stress personal responsibility and public accountability by encouraging responsible citizen action. The organization also educates the public on the structure, responsibilities, and powers of all levels of government, with particular emphasis on the citizen's role in government. All Civic Action Alliance services are provided to the public free of charge, and all corporate professionals serve on a voluntary basis.

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Welcome to the Club!

By Tom Swanner
TSU Community Editor

When I moved back to Sacramento a few years ago, I had no friends and no social outlets. Standing around a bar by myself was horrible, but what other choices? After all this isn't San Francisco. Sacramento is a quiet little town, right? I looked around and found that there are actually quite a few clubs and social groups in the Sacramento area and I searched until I found the right one for me. Since becoming a member in the Sacramento Valley Bears, a whole new world has opened up for me (including writing in this paper). I have a great bunch of friends and never have a problem finding something to do. We are dedicating this section of the paper to highlight groups and clubs in the Sacramento area so, hopefully, you can find the one that's right for you. I will be continuously searching for new information on existing groups as well as those just forming. If I miss any, hopefully someone will contact me and let me know. Remember, we become stronger as a Community when we all become active members in that Community.

Bears! Bears! Everywhere!

By Mark DeVito
TSU Contributing Writer

Bears seen at K Street Mall! Bears spotted at Arden Fair! Bears flock to McDonalds! What? Has the wildlife come out of the woods to live? Has Mother Nature gone crazy? No, it's your neighbor, doctor, lawyer, best friend or even significant other. It's any man possessing "bearish" attributes. There's an ongoing debate as to what a type of man gets to be a bear. As in nature, there are many types of bears, with no one definite image. That holds true for the human population as well. We range from short to tall, thin to not so thin, clean-shaven to bearded, smooth to furry, and everything in between. We wear jeans and leather, to Armani and Brooks Brothers. But, we all share one common bond in our hearts and minds that unites us: we are bears.

In Sacramento, many of us have joined together in a group called The Sacramento Valley Bears. I'm a Board member of that group as well as a member of two other Bear Clubs in California. The Sacramento Valley Bears, or SVB, offers a place for men of bearish nature to come together and be a part of the Bear Community as well as *Our Community*. The SVB offers a wide range of activities outside of the bar setting for its current members, as well as non-members, to enjoy. The SVB is in its fifth year of existence and stands currently at a membership of 135. The SVB offers a place where they fit in and has seen a growth of almost 90% in one years time.

Besides holding general meetings once a month, where new members or those curious about the club are always welcome, the SVB has quite a lot to offer it's members. As a group we do what is called a "Bears-Night-Out," where we choose a restaurant and meet for a relaxing dinner once a month. We also hold a Game Night once a month at a member's home where bears can socialize, or play a variety of card, board, or table games. We sponsor rafting trips on the American River, camping trips to Guerneville and Tahoe, pizza parties, movie nights, walking tours of Sacramento and various other cities, and have regularly scheduled trips to various Community events. One of our main functions is our Bears-In-The-Sac Weekend in August. This is a three day event that offers a weekend of great times and camaraderie amongst the bears in Sacramento and the surrounding areas. It's the weekend when we choose our Mr. Sacramento Valley Bear. It's the Bears version of a pageant. This year the event falls on the 7th-9th of August, so make plans to join us!

Besides all the fun, there is a serious side to the SVB. We are staunch supporters of many local charities in and out of Sacramento. We hold various events throughout the year that raise a considerable amount of monies for these charities. We

Continued page 21

Calendar of Events

Sac Valley Bears
- **04/18** Game night 7:00 535-5050 for location
- **04/21** Bears night out 6:30 535-5050 for location
- **05/06** General Meeting 7:00 Joseph's T&C upstairs
- **05/09** Bears beer bust 5:00-9:00 The Bolt

GSAC
- **04/18** General meeting 7:00 388-1619 for location
- **04/25** Dinner out 7:00
- **05/10** Coffee out 7:00

CCLA
- **04/19** Pig out (beer and soda bust) 5:00-9:00 The Bolt
- **05/13** Gen. meeting 7:00 Joseph's T&C upstairs

Valley Knights
- **04/16** Gen. meeting 7:00 455-6540 for location
- **05/09** Mr. Sacramento Drummer Contest 10pm The Bolt

Frontrunners
- Call info line for events 974-8199

SGA
- 2nd and 4th Saturdays 7pm
- Dinner Social at Joseph's Lounge and Showroom

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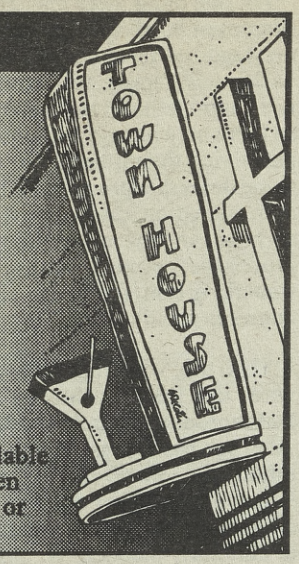
This Side Up newspaper Publisher and staff will be available at Town House the fourth Tuesday of each month between 6:00 and 8:00 pm to solicit your input on the newspaper or important issues affecting *Our Community*.



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Law & Disorder

The Last Word

By Andrew Last
TSU Writer/Columnist

To those of you who read my column last month, welcome back! To those of you who are joining us for the first time, this space is going to cover social security disability issues, criminal law, AIDS related topics and pretty much anything else that concerns our readers or that I decide to rant about as deadline approaches.

This month, we're going to start at the very beginning. Let's say that you decided to get tested for HIV. You give a blood sample, and when you return to get your results, the counselor says that you have tested positive for the HIV antibody. The counselor probably says a bunch of other things too, but you lose track of everything after the word "positive."

Where do you start to put your life together?

First of all. GO TO THE DOCTOR! You may have contracted the disease two months ago, or you could have gotten it two years ago and not have realized it all this time. Either way, this is first and foremost a medical condition, and you should treat it as such. Studies have proven that immediate treatment can make a tremendous difference in both life expectancy and the overall quality of life, whether one is seeking to prevent the onset of more advanced symptoms or one hopes to try to repair damage that has already been done.

The second point follows logically from the first. PLAN FOR THE LONG HAUL. New treatment options (new drugs, different combinations of drug regimens, a better understanding of the disease) have changed the way we look at HIV. It wasn't long ago that people equated an HIV diagnosis with a quick death. But I've had way too many clients tell me "Andrew, the doctor told me I only had six months to live, but that was four years ago. I was all ready to die, but I didn't. Now what do I do?"

For example, what do you do about your job? Should you keep working, or should you quit and travel around the world?

The answer depends on many different factors, but the number one question is your health. Talk to your doctor. Does he/she recommend that you keep working? If your condition has not progressed too far, working may be one of the best things you can do for yourself. It is far more difficult to give into a disease and give up all hope if you don't have something to keep you busy, such as having a regular schedule, job responsibilities or ongoing contact with others, like co-workers, employees or customers. As adults, most of us define ourselves to a large extent by our jobs. When the job is gone, so is a large part of "us."

Perhaps your physician thinks you should cut back on your hours, or try to take on lighter duties. Ask if she/he thinks this is only a temporary measure, and if so, when can you resume business as usual? Is it a matter of lowering the viral load, and if so, how low for how long? Try to set concrete goals to work toward under your doctor's supervision.

In some cases, the person is so ill that he cannot work at all for the time being. In that case, he should apply for any and all disability insurance that he can. Employees should qualify for State Disability Insurance so long as they have worked in California for more than a few months. Remember that this is a short term program; benefits can only be paid up to one year. While that is going on, you can and should also apply for Federal Disability Assistance through your local Social Security office. You should start that process as soon as possible, because it can take quite a long time to process. Remember, Social Security is a long-term program; it may take a while to get started, but the benefits will continue to be paid for the rest of your life (unless your condition improves to the point that you no longer need them.)

Social Security can be extremely confusing for all parties concerned: Social Security Administration (SSA) employees, claimants, social workers...I routinely meet with other attorneys who get lost in the myriad of regulations promulgated by SSA. Whether you seek assistance from an attorney, a paralegal, or a social worker, I strongly recommend that you always get help on any Social Security questions from someone that you trust.

Finally, a warning: this column has only scratched the surface of the Social Security puzzle. Every case is different, and individual results can vary dramatically based on small factual or legal distinctions. Moreover, there are literally hundreds of other disability programs besides Social Security. Each program has its own rules and its own characteristics. Be sure to seek expert advice before making any decision that could affect your financial security.

TSU...

Andrew Last is a Sacramento area attorney focusing on criminal defense and Social Security appeals for HIV+ patients. He can be reached by mail care of This Side Up newspaper, via E-Mail at SactoPub@aol.com, or directly at (916) 446-5574.

Jayne Rountree Commemorative Library
Community Meeting
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Sacramento, CA 95814

Will There Be Gay Bars at the End of History?

By Paul Varnell
Syndicated Columnist

After Equality, what? That is to say, at some point in the indefinite future when gays and lesbians achieve equality, when we are fully accepted as equal, what will gay life be like? What will the gay community be like? Will there even be a gay community?

No one knows. But it is not an idle question. Equality is, after all, the end-state toward which most of our political effort, our time, our energy, our money, is aimed. So asking the question amounts to asking "What are we working toward?"

To begin with, it is far from clear that gays will ever achieve complete (social, legal, moral) equality. Have other historically stigmatized groups been fully accepted as equal? We do not have a lot of evidence that that happens.

Just as likely, we will asymptotically achieve acceptance-that is, gradually approaching equality but never quite reaching it. Eventually it just may not be possible to make any further progress against a hard core of resistance.

In some places or among some social/cultural groups gays may continue to be thought of as inferior, defective, immoral, evil or threatening.

For one thing there may always be sources of hostility that will disseminate a message hostile to us. Just as there are still backwoods racists, anti-semitic groups, even anti-Catholic zealots in this country, so there may always be homophobes promoting their message to people seeking some definable group to blame for their own alienation, discontent or lack of success. And there will always be doctrinal groups that define themselves by rejecting something else (fundamentalist Islam comes to mind).

Then too, what if humans have hard-wired into their psychology a root notion that reproduction and success with the other sex has intrinsic merit? If that is inborn, then there will be a point beyond which our quest for equality cannot go. We do not currently know whether it is inborn or culturally induced. We may find out.

Even if we achieved complete acceptance it seems unlikely that we will ever be regarded as "the same." We are, after all, only a small percentage of the population. If two men walk down the street holding hands they may draw notice in a way that a man and a woman doing so might not, not because people will be disapproving but because it is uncommon, like a man in a top hat. So we will, at least on occasion, never be completely invisible to others.

For the same reason, we will never eliminate the so-called "heterosexual presumption," the assumption that you are heterosexual unless otherwise stated. The T-shirts and buttons that say "How dare you presume that I'm heterosexual" make an arresting consciousness-raising statement, but no statistical sense at all.

If 95 percent of the population is heterosexual, people are going to assume, reasonably enough, that any given person is heterosexual. It need not be hostile; it is simply a safe bet. (In most parts of the U.S. Jews encounter the "Christian presumption" and in most gay enclaves Republicans encounter the "Democratic presumption.")

The point is that we are not likely to cease being aware of ourselves as members of a minority, even if we become fully accepted. Those who long for a feeling of identicality, unobtrusiveness or unself-consciousness that they may (at best) now feel only in a totally gay environment are likely to be disappointed.

Will there be a gay community, even gay bars, when equality happens? Partly, of course, gays coalesce socially and politically in response to hostile external pressure. If there is no hostility, there will be no pressure forcing gays together. But gays may still converge because of a kind of natural attraction rooted in a desire to be among people like themselves, people whose erotic and emotional vectors are intuitively comprehensible.

So many gays will still gather together in enclaves, social groups or friendship clusters as an "affinity group" like any other. Other gays may feel it less

Continued page 21

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Transgender Identity

By Annette Gallo
TSU Contributing Writer

Editor's note: In accordance with the author's wishes, the spelling of the word "transsexual" has been changed to "transexual." This reflects a movement currently gaining strength on the East coast. This small action signals that the TG community is now molding TG identity, rather than accepting definitions imposed by the medical establishment and the mainstream.

When we delve into gender, we are dealing with a reality that every person has experienced. Everyone is an expert on gender. The problem is that we live in a dominant culture that contains numerous mechanisms which work to obscure our conscious awareness of it.

For those of us who choose a transgendered lifestyle, many factors heighten our awareness of gender. There are some people, for the most part transexuals, who think that this qualifies us as the gurus of gender.

I do not really think that necessarily makes us better experts on gender issues than a person who has found a way to live comfortably in the gender of their birth. In fact, the transexual process itself is a microcosm of our dominant culture. It is entirely possible to transition from an awkward gender role to one that is more comfortable without ever really understanding why it was necessary.

Many discussions regarding transgenderism are built upon so many preconceived stereotypes that they are useless. What I find very interesting is the many diametrically opposed stereotypes which comprise some of these assumptions. Rather than being experts or dupes regarding gender issues, we have varying degrees of awareness about gender issues, the same as everyone else. But, for some yet to be explained reason, this type of dichotomous opinion about us remains extant in our culture.

There are other ambivalent attitudes about us regarding everything from our sexuality to our ego strength. Ideas about our social stability, financial resources, and ability to maintain an intimate relationship also range from the extreme positive to the extreme negative. A much larger question then comes to the forefront: How can there be any such label as transgender identity if it contains so many ambiguous and self contradictory characteristics?

There is clearly something known as a lesbian identity, and also a gay identity. Years of activism have wrought this status from an unwilling dominant culture. Certainly stereotypes are imposed upon the gay and lesbian identities. But the identity comes from within each community, not from without.

Transgender identity, on the other hand, has not established itself in the same way. We transgenderists are under tremendous social pressure to spend as little time as possible out of the closet. We are encouraged to be out only as long as it takes to successfully transition into our gender of preference. Once accomplishing that, we are supposed to stop being naughty girls or boys and assume our proper roles in healthy heterosexual relationships.

Statistically it is unlikely for successful heterosexual relationships to ensue from gender transition, especially for male to female transexuals. The tendency is for transexuals to go back into the closet after final transition. This happens exactly as standard medical practice recommends. However, the development of heterosexual relationships after final sex change surgery does not occur as frequently as the medical community would like to claim.

Female to male transexuals are more likely to end up in heterosexual relationships. Male to female transexuals sometimes pair up as lesbian couples. Occasionally a transexual woman becomes what might be called a "Stepford wife." The negative connotation conveys the resentment against the stereotypical woman's role that is expected of us. In transgender relationships, as in all human relationships, many combinations are possible. Limitations restrict personal freedom, encourage stereotypes, and as such are unacceptable.

In any case, the desire to pass as a genetically born member of the transexual's gender of preference always seems to be more important than the sexual preference held prior to gender transition. Sexual preferences often change. Even we transexuals surprise ourselves by the types of relationships that develop after sex changes. Regardless of the sexual orientation that takes place in our relationships, we still do our best to be identified as anonymous members of one of the two normal genders rather than become known as transgenderists.

Consequently, the dominant culture continues to have its way with us. We have no coherent group identity. Even in our community of gay, lesbian, and bisexual brothers and sisters, we transgenderists are largely misunderstood. As our community continues to develop an even larger group identity, encompassing all of our diversity, perhaps we will gain the exposure that we need to make ourselves known to others as well as ourselves.

TSU...

SGA Talent Show Smash Hit

By Matthew Burlingame
TSU Contributing writer

The Blue Rose Chapter of the Sacramento Gender Association held their 2nd Annual Talent Show, Saturday March 28th, at Joseph's Bar and Grill on Del Paso Blvd. The crowd totaled over 100.

Highlights of the evening included local stand up Jamie Stowell, a post-op transsexual, telling jokes such as "I'd do the surgery over again, but I don't have the balls." Also scoring big was Krystel, took the stage dressed as Peg Bundy and running through the audience handing out Bon-Bons to her many admirers. As she took the stage she favored the rowdy crowd, with a song devoted to her p...uh...cat.

The evening was over too soon as singers, dancers and cross-dressing strippers gave their all to please the diverse audience. Special thanks went to organizers Krystel and Tina Louise.

"If you think this is something," one Board Member said, "Wait till November. This year's Miss SGA Pageant is going to blow this event apart at the seams."

TSU...

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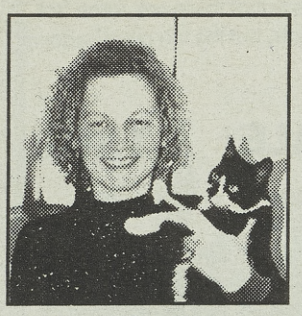


TVs on TV

By T. Laine Cunningham
TSU Transgender Editor

As usual, Hollywood continues to reflect only the mainstream lifestyle. With the cancellation of ABC's *Ellen*, the nation will no longer see a member of *Our Community* in a primary role. This winter, Fox premiered a series called *Ask Harriet.* In this charming story, a man was forced to cross-dress in order to obtain a job as an advice columnist. The show was yanked after three episodes and its final status remains a mystery.

Ask Harriet initially seemed to be a positive step for TGs, particularly with a cross-dresser in the staring role. Showing the public a man in a dress every week would make getting out and about easier for TGs in general. The story line, however, cannot really be considered an advancement for any portion of *Our Community*. The show can say little about the way TVs and TSs really live and the complex issues they face every day when the character is **forced** to dress.

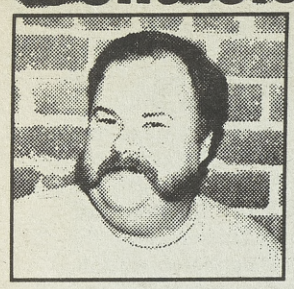
But glimmers of hope continue to crop up. A recent episode of *The Drew Carey Show* introduced Drew's brother, a CD. In that episode "Roger" began working at the department store's makeup counter as a woman. In a second appearance, she jokingly considers coming out to her parents at a time when her father is completely stressed.

Although the character is a minor one, her treatment by ABC's writers is commendable. She is neither ridiculed as a stereotype nor treated with kid gloves. She has faults and foibles, can laugh at herself, and is a capable human being just like all the other characters. At a time when images of *Our Community* are being erased from the nation's eye, *The Drew Carey Show* is breaking new ground.

So let's take a minute to thank them. Characters that represent real individuals increase the positive self-image of TGs and *Our Community* as a whole. They also help bridge the gap between *Our Community* and the straight world, a gap that seems to be widening lately. The straight voice is not the only voice, but producers have to hear it. You can write to the producers of *The Drew Carey Show* or *Ellen* at ABC-TV, 77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023, or e-mail through their web site at www.abc.com/vvoice/mail.html. Letters to individual stars may be sent to The Drew Carey Show, Warner Bros. Television, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522.

TSU...

A Fish, A Wish and a Swish...



By Tom Swanner
TSU Video Reviewer

It may sound odd but I like some of this month's movies. If you don't know me, I don't like much. Well that's not completely true. I just hate too much.

THE LITTLE MERMAID

(Rated G)

Oh no, second month in a movie row to have a Disney movie on top. This is *The Little Mermaid* though. It's a classic. I loved this one when it first came out and now that it's been re-mastered I love it even more. Well, not more, but it sure sounded a lot better, and was still as colorful. The best part is that it's available to buy in case you missed it before. I, of course, have the original release and have been enjoying it since the purchase. *The Little Mermaid* was the film that got Disney back on top and cleared the way for other classic's like *Aladdin, The Lion King* and my favorite, the almost perfect, *Beauty and the Beast.*

IN AND OUT

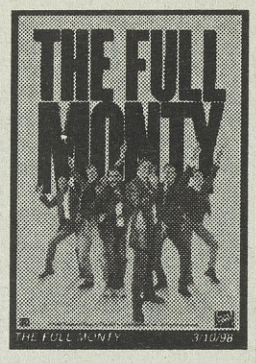
(Rated PG-13)

This is a very enjoyable movie with a wonderful cast. A teccher is outed on the Oscars by a former student and the aftermath comically rips this man's life apart. Wow, that sounds so dramatic. Anyway, this mainstream gay comedy may lack real meat, but for most of us it serves as a reminder that your own coming out was nowhere near as devastating. Joan Cusack does have way to much fun with her role. So much so she received a well deserved Oscar nomination. Kevin Kline and Tom Selleck also star. HELLO!!!!

THE FULL MONTY

(Rated R)

A group of down on their luck men decide to strip for money. A comedy, right? That's what I saw in the movie preview. What I got was a drama about a town so poor that most of the residents are about to lose their homes and have to think of some way to pay the bills. Strip. I would have liked this more if I wasn't expecting a comedy. Show me what the movie is about and let me decide if I really want to see it. Still the film has a big heart that pulls it through and some very adorable actors to make it all the more real.



I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER

(Rated R)

Four teenagers accidentally kill a man and then move the body to make it look like he drowned. One year later the four start receiving mysterious notes and visits from..the man they killed??? I hope this is a horror film. It is. And a good little one at that. Written by *Scream* screenwriter Kevin Williamson. I will say that there are some "roll your eyes" moments, but the fun overshadows them.

FAIRYTALE: A TRUE STORY

(Rated PG)

This is a true story about a young girl who took a photograph of real fairies. No real fairies. This a charming little film that reminds me of *The Little Princess.* It has a merchant/ivory feel without the slow pacing. I did find the fairies a bit odd at first. But than I got over it and really enjoyed the film.

PEACEMAKER

(Rated R)

Bad guys steal a bomb and good guys save the world. George Clooney and Nicole Kidman star. George comes on screen all butch and -- wow -- doesn't he look great. Nicole on the other hand starts off all butch and looking great and then just turns into a big girl. Hands in the air screaming while George saves the day. Nicole, honey, you can't save the world that way, you gotta be rough and tough. I've seen you do it before. Jodie Foster can do it and Sigourney Weaver and Winona Ryder did it, so can you. Still *Peacemaker* is a lot of fun with plenty of action to keep things moving.

TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS

(Rated PG-13)

Sometime in the future, doctors are able to tell when fetus' carry the gay gene. Scary concept. Branden Fraser stars as the gay brother who finds out his sister is considering aborting her child which is carrying that gene. Good performances all around including Jennifer Beals and Faye Dunaway.

ULEE'S GOLD

(Rated R)

Peter Fonda stars as a father who's still taking care of his adult children's problems. The movie's a little slow. Not *English Patient* slow, but slow all the same. Fonda's character is a bee keeper so we do get to see how honey is removed from combs and the behind the scenes of the honey business. This is really the best part of the movie. The performances are good but the script is a bit boring. I really didn't like the family, but hey now, I now know where honey comes from.

KISS ME GUIDO

(Rated R)

This was made on a very low budget. It doesn't have fabulous special effects or wonderful sets and camera angles. It does have a cute little story about a young naive actor moving into uptown to start his acting career. He needs a place to live and ends up moving in with a young wise gay actor. Such promise. It probably should be on the "good" list but the lack of good acting was hard to get over. When you watch it you'll understand. Still, it's sweet and funny.

IN THE COMPANY OF MEN

(Rated R)

All I heard was how fabulous this film was. Critics best picture lists and won ton's of awards. This is going to be a real treat, right? Oh no. Two bastards, bored and angry at women, decide that while on a six week business trip they will find a woman and treat her like they feel they have been treated. This is one of the most mean spirited movies I've seen in a long time.

Maybe I've missed some point it was trying to make, but, for me it's enough to make sure you don't become infected by this rabid film.

U-TURN

(Rated R)

Never has a movie title served a better warning. Do not rent this film. I saw it in the theater so I sat through the whole horrible thing. Consider yourself warned. I'd rather watch a Ronald Reagan film festival then this again. The only good thing about this garbage heap is a very original performance by Billy Bob Thorton. I can't say anything more that can be printed.

MORTAL KOMBAT II

(Rated PG-13)

This answers the age old question of wether we learn from our mistakes. I guess not.

Our Mania Over Movies

By Billy Whitlock Jr.
TSU Contributing Writer

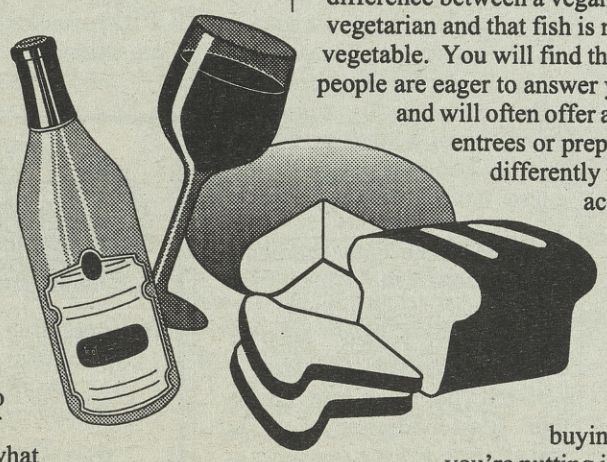
Movies. They hold our dreams, our passions, our pain, our joy, our fears and hopes and our inner child. Like most art, they are a reflection of ourselves...our humanity, our inhumanity and ultimately our never ending struggle to reach beyond ourselves. They are the result of pure imagination, taken shape in all the colors and lights and digitized sounds we can imagine and comprehend. And there is no limit to the stories they tell us and the places they allow us to visit. Movies are bigger than all of us -- small windows into realities that excite us, or realities we would fear to acknowledge without the safety of the screen to protect us. We hope to use this page to provide you with a road map...a guide to which windows you wish to peer through, and those which you wish to carefully avoid. Welcome to Celluloid....

TSU...

Survival Tip Of The Month

By Billy Whitlock Jr.
TSU Food Editor

The first survival tip is not for the vegetarians, nor the carnivores. It's not for the Diabetics or for those of us who are trying to lose weight. Instead it's for all of us. The first and most important survival tip for everyone who has special needs and/or concerns when ordering their food is simply: never be afraid to ask questions. If you're not sure what the ingredients are or how something is cooked - ask. If a server is unable to answer your question, get the manager or have them ask the cooks who prepare the food. If something comes pre-made, have them read the list of ingredients off the box. Also make sure that your question is clear. For instance, if you are a vegan make sure the server understands the difference between a vegan and a vegetarian and that fish is not a vegetable. You will find that most people are eager to answer your questions and will often offer alternative entrees or prepare the food differently in order to accommodate you. It's your money and your body. You deserve to know exactly what you're buying and what you're putting in your body.



In the end, if the restaurant is either unable or unwilling to answer your question, ask yourself this: "Does this place really deserve my business?"

TSU...

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THIS SIDE UP

This Side Up Publisher and staff look forward to meeting you and hearing your thoughts about TSU, Our Community and whatever else is on your mind.

Fourth Tuesday of Each Month 6 - 8 pm at Townhouse 1517 21st St.	Fourth Wednesday of Each Month 7 - 9 pm at Mirage 15th & F St.	Fourth Thursday of Each Month 6 - 8 pm at Capitol Garage 1427 L St.
See Ad Page 15	See Ad Page 4	See Ad Page 19

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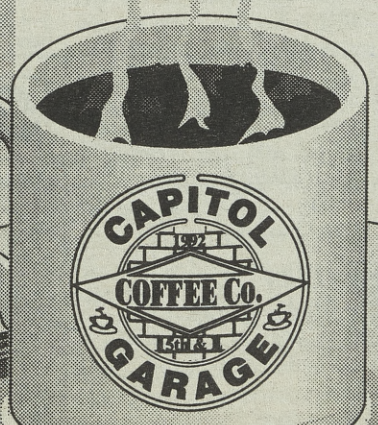

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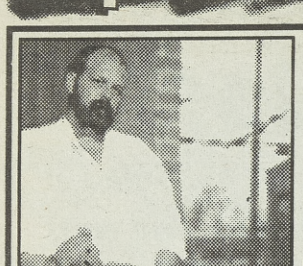

Modem of Travel

By Troy DeVore
TSU Pop Culture Editor

Here are some of the best local websites for *Our Community*. If you know of others you'd like to see, TELL ME!! Pop Culture at *This Side Up*, 920A 20th Street, Sacramento CA 95814, or E-Mail me at troysideup@hotmail.com

http://www.pridecentral.com
Northern California's premiere on-line G/L/B/T friendly business listing.

http://www.facesnightclub.com
The Faces website.

http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/1700
Sacramento Valley Bears Website.

http://www.pridecentral.com/jrlibrary
Yes we do have a library for *Our Community*.

http://www.lifelobby.org
Life Lobby's website.

http://www.calweb.com/~authors
Share your work with other local authors.

http://www.freeyellow.com/members2/field/
One of the fastest growing independent sites on the web.

TSU...

Gossip! Gossip! Gossip!

By Logomania
TSU Writer/Columnist

Whenever we embark on new avenues we always surround ourselves with the familiar. This column today, and as the years progress, will be no deviation from that standard. You should always be looking over your shoulder if you don't want my hungry eyes, and ears, to be fed.

Sacramento has given way to tradition as Ernie Brown (highly acclaimed bartender) and La Kish (even higher acclaimed cocktail waitress and, without question, always royalty) will almost automatically reign as your new Emperor and Empress of C.G.N.I.E. (California Golden Northwest Imperial Empire). Now, remember this acronym because it will come up, I'm sure, in future columns.

They will celebrate their 25th year back together as reigning monarchs for Sacramento! Are there changes therefore coming in C.G.N.I.E.? Coronation is coming in a few weeks, watch for flyers.

Lotto fever struck the owners of the Townhouse and many of their guests. Maybe one was the lucky winner. Faces owner, Terry, has been busy, we see, on his great outdoors...Joseph of Joseph's, on the other hand, has been seen wandering around his dining room on Sundays during brunch like a minstrel greeting his guests.

Watch for the annual garden tour of Sacramento's finest garden spots, coming soon. Flyers are everywhere. Want us to see your garden? Call Phil, he'll put your green acres on the tour. It's a fundraiser, of course, and all in good taste and fun. Either sign up, or take the tour. Either way you will be contributing.

Speaking of contributing, you can contribute to this revealing, all-knowing column by sending your tidbits to *This Side Up* 920A 20th Street, Sacramento CA 95814, Fax # 916/443-3550, E-Mail: SactoPub@aol.com. For the time being, I'll remain anonymous, but soon you'll figure out who I am and then the atrocities can commence.

I'll be watching you all at the Coronation...

TSU...

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HOROSCOPE

By Thor
TSU Writer/Columnist

CAPRICORN
12/22 - 1/20

Forget last month, this month is gonna be filled with good things. Damn you're impatient this month! You are so focused on what you want, you're having trouble seeing what's right in front of your face. Slow down and nurture what you have instead of rushing out and getting a new one. The seed you planted is about to sprout, but, it's not the bean stalk you think it'll be. Just give it time. You'll also feel the need to organize in anticipation of the arrival of your desires. Do it, you wished big and it will definitely take up some space.

AQUARIUS
1/21 - 2/19

It's good to see you more relaxed and feeling ready to handle anything. Now you need to back off and give your partner or close friend some space. They're gonna fall on their backside, but they need to learn this one alone. Have you considered watching TV to drown out the voices in your head that make you want to be so busy all the time? Knit a sweater or try something artistic. If you find yourself faced with a challenge take it; if you don't know what you're doing fake it.

PISCES
2/20 - 3/20

Pisces, you need to start returning calls if you want that special someone to know you still care. They're waiting for you to get it together and aren't going to wait forever. Can you moan a little louder? I don't think they heard you on Jupiter! And now that it's warming up, quit hiding under all those layers of clothes. It's time to show off your special attributes.

ARIES
3/21 - 4/20

Okay, so the goat ate your friend's wallet. But if you loan him money when you can't afford to, you'll be sorry. If you're thinking about going back to school, just do it! If you wait, you'll never do it. Money will be coming soon. Hold on to it, you are gonna need it later. You're so busy with romance that you won't have time for spring cleaning. Don't worry about it. It'll be there next month.

TAURUS
4/21 - 5/21

If your car is giving you trouble, take care of it now as it's only gonna get worse. Finances are looking a lot better for you this month. You might be getting too relaxed when it comes to security. Keep your house and car locked, or you just may find yourself without something you value more than you might think. As a bull, stubbornness is expected, but do what's right or you can kiss your Leo friend goodbye. And you really need each other cause face it, nobody else can tolerate you. Take some time to pick up the phone and just say "hi" to someone you like talking to.

GEMINI
5/22 - 6/21

If an elder is offering you help, take it. You need it more than you even realize. Sit down and have a talk with yourself - you're spending too much time thinking about how to handle situations. Just let things happen for a change instead of forcing every issue. Try taking your shoes off and walking around barefoot - it may help ground you a little. If you're going to pick a fight, please choose someone you can win with. You'll never beat your other half. It's time to change that hairstyle! It's so over!

CANCER
6/22 - 7/23

When is the last time you called your Mother? It's time, silly Cancer. She likes hearing from you more than you might think. Are you still taking the St. John's Wort? If you are, I'd be willing to bet your blood pressure is lower than it's been for a really long time. I know you really don't care, but it's time for spring cleaning. Not only will it make you feel better, but you might find one or two chairs to sit on.

LEO
7/24 - 8/23

I know you're excited that Christmas is only seven months away, but you better take care of the here and now. You know people only hate you 'cause you're beautiful, so try wearing something a little sexier to make everyone hate you. If you don't believe that, ask another Leo. Stop playing with fate by letting the gas gauge get so low. When you find yourself walking home from Nebraska or someplace in a Stephen King novel, don't call me.

VIRGO
8/24 - 9/23

What made you say that to your friend? So what if it was true, that doesn't mean you needed to say it. I know you felt you needed to, but you didn't. Even if they didn't say so, you really irritated them. You may hear from someone who want's to gossip. If you feel like you need to avoid too personal of a conversation, do it. You hate nosey people and are much more interested in getting dirt on others than giving it out about yourself. And believe me, this person is gonna use it!

LIBRA
9/24 - 10/23

Expect a quiet month. This is a good time to do all those little things you need to catch up on. Your scales will end up out of balance if you're not taking care of business. If you're mad at a friend it's time to forgive and forget. They didn't mean to do it and it could have happened to anyone - even you. That blindfold you sometimes wear should be on right now. Pop a Mentos and get over it!

SCORPIO
10/24 - 11/22

Change is the flavor of the month! Same as the flavor of the year. I, being a Scorpio myself, know how much you hate that. Try meditation as a way to calm down and roll with the inevitable. Although it may be a hassle to deal with, you'll be pleased at the results. Your mate will be a great source of comfort to you now. Be one back; they need you just as much. Put your stinger away and lie low. You're making it tougher on yourself by being on the defensive. If you continue, it's you that'll feel the burn.

SAGITTARIUS
11/23 - 12/21

Concentrate on yourself for awhile. Forget about all that crap going on in the house next door. You've got more than enough to keep you busy all month. Don't overdo it though or you'll find yourself walking around like you have one foot nailed to the floor, and you'll never get anything done. If you happen to rent a movie, make it a comedy. You definitely need to laugh more and splurge a little -go ahead and put the butter on your popcorn.

Continued...

I Walk the Old Path
Continued from page 9

things spiritual, but I could not erase the memory of the forest. I still longed to make the deeper connections with the universe around me. Eventually I met others who were men and women of the forest, of the earth and air and water and fire. They understood me when I talked about my friends who were trees and mountains and chipmunks. I took their hands and called myself a Pagan. It was a rebirth like nothing I had experienced before.

I was asked recently what I gain from Paganism that I did not find in Christianity. The right to accept and love myself in totality is the primary thing, but there are others.

As a father, I no longer had to embrace the central image of the sacrificial son dying a protracted, bloody death because of the wrath of his father. In Paganism, all sons and all daughters are to be cherished, and the images of children are celebratory. In Christianity there is a father and a son in the godhead, but no mother and no daughter. Certainly there is no gay man. The godhead did not reflect me or ever understand and cherish me. I was instead reviled.

I can put away my cross, that implement of capital punishment, and carry instead the primary symbol of Paganism, the all embracing circle. I can stop seeing babies as tainted with the original sin of Adam and Eve and start seeing them as the perfect, sacred beings that they are. I can honor all things feminine as equal in value and power to things masculine for in my pantheon, there is a goddess and a spring maiden as well as the great god of light and the son. I can reject the irrationality of the dogma that the world was created for my use and my dominion, and relax into the understanding that I am one magnificent part of an equally magnificent whole; I am truly a brother of the ant and the heron and the sweeping horizon. I can find comfort in the Great Mother as well as protection in the Great Father. I can leave behind the danger of swallowing "revealed truth," whether by pastor or scripture, and continue on the never-ending, joyous adventure of discovering and honoring my own path, my vision of truth. I can stop trying desperately to make others believe as I do and start smiling at the wonder of our diversity in all things, including our spiritual paths. I can stop fearing my body as a source of temptation and shame and begin to revel in the pleasure and laughter and insight that it gives me. I can cash in the concept of sin and collect the dividend of harmony with all things. I can integrate into rather than separate out.

Most of all, I can stop seeing the world as a constant battle between opposing forces — heaven/hell, light/darkness, saved/unsaved, God/Satan, holy/unholy, redeemed/condemned, us/them — and I can start finding true wisdom by learning to integrate these seemingly contradictory forces, to see how they work in tandem to create something larger. In Paganism, these forces are simply the forces of balance that make a whole thing possible. The shadow is no less valid than the tree that cast it. The labor of the day is nothing without the slumber of the night. You are gravity; I am centrifugal force, and together we create a habitable earth. There is no contradiction anymore between the sacredness of the divine and the sacredness of me and the sacredness of the planet. I can find in our disagreement a chance for both of us to find a more complete balance. I no longer have to draw battle lines. I can instead build bridges.

Do you remember the teeter totter — the rise and the fall, the thrill of the height and the bump of the ground? I remember vividly from my childhood that amazing and giddy moment when a friend and I were able to balance the teeter totter so that we were both suspended above the ground, balancing each other into the air itself. What a triumph of peerage! What simple joy! That is what I found in Paganism.

That, and I can dance around fairy rings without shame.

TSU...

"Town Hall"
Continued from page 14

Cassese spoke in favor of saving the LCF. "There were times we'd find a young girl sleeping in the doorway because her mother found out she was a lesbian and threw her out. There was a time when the *Sacramento AIDS Foundation* didn't accept gay men and we would find a gay man with full-blown AIDS and no money - nowhere to go - sleeping at the back door. I stayed up for 48-hours writing the grant for *Lambda AIDS Project*. We were there for those people and that's what the Center was and should be."

"When things weren't getting done, we should have burst through the doors and demanded an explanation of exactly what was going on and taken responsibility for making certain our needs were being met."

"I guess the question being asked is what direction should we go? Well, the direction is forward." *Faces* owner Terry Sidie spoke before having to leave for a fund-raiser. "We've done what we can for the Center. They came to us for help with their rent and we offered to pay the rent for three months. We gave them a check for $900 and three weeks later, it's all gone. I admire the *Community's* desire to pay the debt, but if we do, let's do it sensibly. Let's take the time to do it right and stop making the same mistakes that have been made over and over again."

As the announcement came that LCF President Jorge Martinez had resigned several days before the meeting, questions were raised as to whether operating the LCF with only two remaining Board members violates the corporate Bylaws. As copies of the Bylaws, not updated since 1995, were passed around, Matthews explained that the bylaws require a minimum of five Board members.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of screening for Board members. "They are being hired for a job and no one is making certain they have the skills to do that job," Cassese stated. "They need to be interviewed just as if they were applying for a position with any company."

Tom Swanner, *TSU* Community Editor and former Board member of the Sacramento Valley Bears noted. This is a forum that involves the entire *Community,* and I'm disappointed to see the lack of media coverage at an event that has the potential to reshape *Our Community*."

Toward the end of the meeting, the future of the youth movement became a large focus as Youth Group member and *TSU* Youth Editor, Anny Gateley, stated: "The Youth Group is no longer a part of the LCF, we are a self-existing entity. I've heard a lot of people talking about the importance of LCF programs and I personally feel that the Youth Group is the most important. Without it, I imagine I would have been dead by 15. I'm 17 now, I've been a member since just before I turned 13 - that's a significant portion of my life." Yes, money is important. Yes, the Board is important. But, if you don't do anything - if nothing gets done - there's no point to having it either."

A follow-up meeting is in the works.

TSU...

A tape of highlights from the Town Hall Meeting will be aired on Being Gay Today, Comcast Public Access, Channel 73.

Will There Be Gay Bars...
Continued from 16

imperative than they do now to escape suburbs or small towns. That is beginning to happen some places even now.

There is also an obvious statistical reason to join a gay group or go to a gay bar: The chances are far better that some man there will find me interesting and erotically appealing than in the typical neighborhood bar. So for the single, the young or the randy (and these categories may overlap), gay institutions usefully increase their erotic opportunities and chances of finding a compatible life-partner.

However, there may be less contact between lesbians and gay men than now, since those groups have little in common except similarly stigmatized status. Rhetoric aside, our sexual orientations are, in fact, opposite rather than similar.

Apart from romantic aspirations, are our lives, our lifestyles, our psyches really much different from heterosexuals? I don't know and frankly no one else does either.

That means that equality for gays will be not only a minor social experiment (How does the presence of lots of open gays affect society?), but also will tell us a lot about gays too. That is, how much of our difference, or our sense of difference, is inherent and natural, and how much is induced by growing up and living in a society that has in a variety of ways communicated disapproval of us.

We may find out if some of the psychological qualities (irony, creativity, aestheticism) believed common among (some? many?) gay men are created by growing up under a condition of stigma (and our fumbling youthful efforts to resist or compensate for it), or are in some mysterious way actually a function of same-sex attraction, or whether the whole notion of gay difference is just an illusion, a self-serving, compensatory myth.

Will gays, individuals and couples, want to live their lives pretty much like heterosexuals, sinking into bourgeois normality, living within the same range of options and in roughly the same proportions (ostensible monogamy, suburbs, family ties, etc.)? Not entirely, I suspect, partly because of men's well-attested inherent sexual and social adventurousness, but it may take forms we cannot anticipate.

But equality will not entail that every conduct or lifestyle will be equally acceptable any more than every conduct by heterosexuals is now equally acceptable. Majorities seem to provide acceptance only on their terms, so people will apply the same standards to us that they apply to everyone else. Those who find those standards limiting will continue to feel some disapproval, but based on how they act rather than who they are.

TSU...

Paul Varnell writes for Chicago's Windy City Times and other gay newspapers. His e-mail address is Pvarnell@aol.com

Bears! Bears! Everywhere!
Continued from page 15

have made considerable donations to the Positive Gourmet, U.C. Davis Pediatric Aids Ward and Avalon House to name a few. The donations have been in the form of cash, food, merchandise, and last but not least, ourselves. The SVB is noted for its willingness to pitch in and "get our hands dirty." We have helped rebuild homes, plant trees, played Santa, and various other goodwill activities. We're active in the political arena as well, supporting organization such as Life Lobby and Lambda Letters. This coming May marks the beginning of having guest speakers at general meetings. The first such event will be held on Wednesday May 6th at 7pm at Joseph's Town & Country. The scheduled speaker is the Honorable Sheila Keuhl, Speaker pro Tempore of the California Assembly. Be sure to check out our website at http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/1700/ or call our Hotline at (916)535-5050 to see what we up to in the coming months.

TSU...

Gay Olympics
Continued from page 10

The Gay Games is about unlocking the international closet doors, one at a time, with a key of solidarity in culture, community and sports.

There are athletes who will be competing from around the world, but you will not see them with contracts to promote Chapstick or Campbell's soup. You will not be reading about how many gold medals the U.S. teams bring home, in the Sacramento Bee. And you certainly won't be watching coverage of the competitive events on NBC or CBS. Yet these are all vital individuals who are going to have an opportunity to compete in international sports, with a sense of pride in who they are, and confidence in their goals and accomplishments.

In the coming months, you will get a cultural peek at the Gay Games. You will find out more about the participants, the countries, the events and so on. So stay tuned... these are *Our 'Olympics'*!

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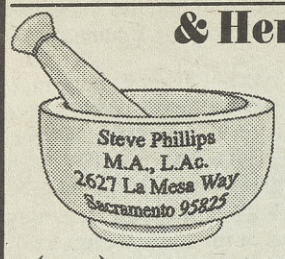

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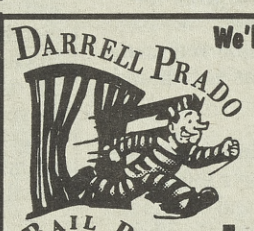

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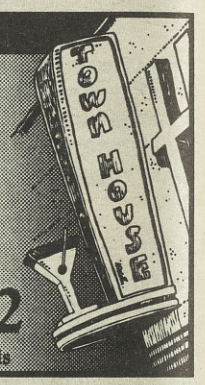

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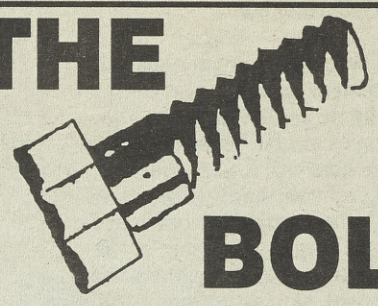

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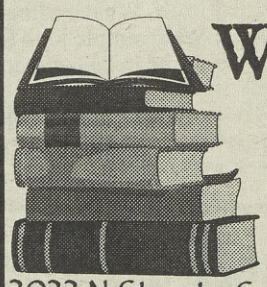

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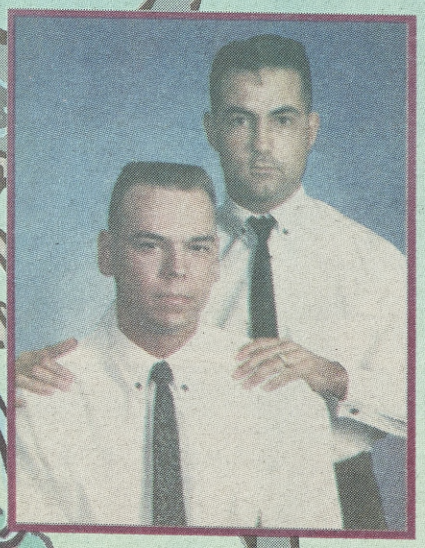

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